MISSISSIPPIAN RITUAL

BY

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a common sentiment among anthropologists of nearly all paradigmatic persuasions that one cannot confidently discuss the whole arena of symbolic representations and meanings in the absence of a full ethnographic context. In archaeological research, where that context is dissolved into a mere shadow, and where informants are not available to answer the pertinent questions, it seems to many that the exploration of prehistoric mental life is a vain hope ensnarled in the subjectivity of interpretation. Such would not be science. If that sentiment were right, my effort of the past few months would have to be judged of little worth.

But despite the complexities I have encountered, I am not prepared to admit that that opinion is correct. My optimism comes from the simple recognition that the material residues of expressive culture are representations—objectifications of thought. In a metaphorical sense, the sacred objects, the ritual structures, and their spatial relationships in archaeological data are like a corpus of myths expressed in a particular idiom, referring to particular ways of thinking about things and categorizing them. With an adequate hermeneutic, it should be possible to partially decode these "texts."

I have only gradually come to this conclusion. On the occasion of remembering the peculiar set of circumstances over the years that has partially predetermined this mind-set, it would be redundant here to list literary influences to which I obviously owe some degree of debt. Their frequency of citation should do the job. More important here

is to acknowledge the greater debt to those who have consistently provided a generous dole of positive reinforcement. Foremost among these are my family members, especially Judith G. Knight and Vernon J. Knight, Sr. All of my teachers and colleagues who have made it possible for me to immerse myself in the data and traditions of Southeastern archaeology and ethnohistory are owed more than I can ever return. It is my opinion that this study or any other like it would be hopelessly hollow and arcane without both boots being thoroughly caked with Southeastern dirt. Among my providers I continue to hold Mr. David L. DeJarnette of Orange Beach, Alabama, in greatest esteem. He may not agree with much that I have to say, but I consider myself mainly his student.

Although it has been a clear relief to finally get these hesitant and tentative thoughts down on paper (many of which seem to have occurred to me in daydream-moments distracted from the proper business of thinking about potsherds and type frequencies), I now realize how much more could have been done. The fact that this much is complete reflects on the marvellous faith of my doctoral committee, who must have sensed that I knew my business. I cannot understand, but I gratefully acknowledge anyway, the pampering I have gotten from Jerald T. Milanich in allowing me the unshamed indulgence of structural dialectics and wholly narrative format. Among other current modes in archaeology of defending one's competence for a doctorate, that will make this dissertation . . . well, different. I am well aware of the present thinness of the empirical ice in this study, and the responsibility of justifying its many faults rests with me alone. I will be satisfied in my naive idealism if I can redirect the attention of some of my colleagues to the sources which have proven most enlightening to me.

Here, then, is my first approximation of an "adequate hermeneutic" for interpreting the ritual symbols of the prehistoric chiefdom-type societies in the Southeastern United States.

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A study was undertaken to assess the symbolic foundations and institutional organization of public ritual among the Mississippian societies of the prehistoric Southeastern United States. The term Mississippian refers to the horticultural chiefdom-type societies which practiced a distinctive platform mound ceremonialism at large village sites in the Southeast during the period A.D. 900-1600.

Earlier investigators of Mississippian expressive culture, notably John R. Swanton, Antonio J. Waring, Jr., and James H. Howard, have made liberal use of ethnohistorical and ethnological accounts of more recent Southeastern Indian ritual in the interpretation of archaeological indications of ritual behavior. The thesis generally adhered to by earlier scholars was that the historic ritual expressions of the Southeastern Indians were attenuated or debased forms of an earlier Mississippian religious complex.

Structural analysis of a Southeastern migration myth, the Chekilli Legend, reveals core symbolism basic to Southeastern cosmology as a whole. The fundamental opposition, between "red/Earth" and "white/Society"

imagery, can be shown to underlie Mississippian platform mound ceremonialism as a rite of intensification emphasizing autochthony, burial, and purification. The symbolism of the platform mound as Earth is largely independent of secondary uses of the mound summits in various socio-cultural contexts. This has caused some confusion in the classification of platform mounds.

The disjunction between the ritual symbols underlying platform mound ceremonialism on the one hand, and the cosmogonic symbolism of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex on the other, suggest that discrete cult institutions are responsible for the two ritual phenomena. Specifically, evidence is marshaled in support of a model of Mississippian ritual organization in which there is a dichotomy between chiefly and priestly ritual. Mississippian societies are hence provisionally aligned with a worldwide class of pre-state societies in which chiefly and priestly cult institutions are held in tension and opposition. In such societies, the power deriving from ritual sanctity does not all flow from a single source, as in "divine kingships," but instead is dichotomized in a politically asymmetrical but ideologically diametric structure.

CHAPTER I
SCOPE AND DEFINITION

Having walked in some village of infidels, have you neared where they make some ceremonies with the intention of learning them?
Timucuan confessionary 1613

This study takes as its subject matter a segment of the expressive culture of a group of prehistoric societies in the Southeastern United States. These are the societies which have gone under the rubric "Mississippian," by which is generally meant the chiefdom-type, horticultural peoples that lived in the Southeast during the period A.D. 900-1600. These related societies were ancestral to the historic Southeastern Indians, including the Cherokee, the Muskogee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, the Natchez, and numerous lesser-known groups.

More specifically, this essay moves towards an analysis of the symbolic bases for Mississippian public ritual. Since many different societies in different settings and times are included in the basic Mississippian construct, this is still a broad (even vast) set of phenomena to consider in a single short treatment. The approach must necessarily be selective and honed down. But the topic itself, set apart in this way, unmasks a crucial prejudice which might as well be admitted plainly at the outset. It is that there is an important unity among the phenomena of Mississippian public ritual wherever they occur in time and space. This is a unity which transcends provincial cultural boundaries and linguistic boundaries, and which crosscuts significant interactional networks. It is a reflection, I think, both of a common cosmological substratum or collective world view, and of

common institutional mechanisms for projecting this cosmology into concrete, behavioral objectifications. In addition, then, to attempting to lay bare some of the deeper levels of symbolism evident in traditional Southeastern expressive culture, it is equally important to explore the institutional frameworks within which these symbols operated and achieved meaning to ritual participants. Roughly, the first and major part of this essay will be devoted to inferences about symbols and meanings. Toward the end, the emphasis will shift toward the consequences of institutional organization in the understanding of the archaeological remains.

First, a series of definitions will serve the purposes of clarifying the theoretical premises and frame in which Mississippian public ritual will be discussed here, and of introducing some of the key terms.

Public ritual may be considered as a stereotyped set of symbolic acts in series, having seven basic characteristics as follows:

1. Public ritual has a "religious" character. This means that the set of symbols which public ritual evokes is considered sacred, and is charged with a sense of ultimacy. In terms of cognitive processes, these religious symbols and their connections constitute a deeply rooted system of thought, bearing on everyday behavior. A universal characteristic of such thought is that it anthropomorphizes the supernatural realm in its attempt to account for the world of everyday experience (Guthrie 1980), that is, it imposes social distinctions on the nonhuman world.

2. These religious symbols act metaphorically at a deep level in the symbolic repertoire of individuals. They provide the ritual actor with a flexible system of "paradigmatic imagery", applicable to any

number of environmental percepts in any number of contexts (Whitten 1978). Ritual symbols are "multivocal", meaning that they are predicated upon a variety of objects and events in the social and material world (Turner 1969:52). Such symbols, at the deepest level of cognitive process, may be justifiably called "core symbols", in reference to the operation of a layered hierarchy of symbols and metaphors in that process. Core symbols, then, constitute a general, analogical, organizational model of the world, mediating percepts and social action.

3. Public ritual is dramatic. It tends to occur "on stage". Ritual stages (for example courtrooms, churches, and lecture halls) are designed to materially reflect the concepts and symbols associated with the ritual itself. Inherent in these stages are ritual boundaries and thresholds, which serve, for example, to segregate order from disorder (Turner 1969:23), or to symbolize the protection of important concepts or states from incursion, with accompanying taboo (Douglas 1966). In many cases, ritual stages for rites of intensification or rites of passage are simplified, symbolic microcosms, directly reflecting in their spatial order a greater, cosmological order (Leach 1976:85-86).

4. Public ritual operates through repetition or redundancy, ultimately focusing upon and highlighting a set of core symbols and relations. It acts as a dramatic, public reminder of the cosmological nature and sacredness of these symbols. It characteristically suspends normal space and time in a metaphorical sense to achieve this effect (Leach 1961). Among its participants, the stereotyped actions and interactions of public ritual serve to promote a given version of reality. It provides a focus for the construction of a mutual sense of what is real. Ethnomethodologists call this property "reflexivity".

5. It is essentially a communicative act, both among ritual actors (Leach 1976) and between society and the supernatural (Guthrie 1980:190). It includes both verbal and nonverbal performances. It should be noted that the performance of myth is neither excluded nor given special status in this definition: it is considered a variety or mode of public ritual. While some investigators have assigned myth to the realm of "belief", saying that it provides a charter for ritual (Wallace 1966:243), it should rather be emphasized that myth is no less a performance or objectification than any other ritual mode. Nor is it more "mental". There are, importantly, no pure or proper versions of myths; they exist in their telling.

6. Public ritual is sponsored by one or more "cult institutions". The concept of cult institution emphasizes that rituals for a given society belong to one or another distinguishable, institutional complex. Each of these complexes may be associated with a differently defined social group, with its own mythology and ceremonial trappings. Several such institutions generally exist concurrently; Wallace (1966:76) counts six of them for the contemporary Iroquois. In this study, when we say we are dealing with Mississippian public ritual, we really refer to only a part of what might collectively be called Mississippian religion. For example, the rites of intensification represented by Mississippian platform mound ceremonialism certainly reflect only one variety of cult institution, that probably associated with an official priesthood, among several in simultaneous existence. The latter include possible shamanic institutions, and specialized religious complexes associated with and addressing other social groups, e.g., ramified systems of warrior-chiefs and their lieutenants.

7. Public ritual and its archaeological manifestations admit of an analytical methodology which treats ritual structures and features as elements of diachronic and synchronic "texts". The exegesis of these texts is made possible by considering replicating correspondence structures along time and space axes (the structural method). These replicating correspondence structures provide clues to deep symbolic structures. In practice, one searches for an appropriate and comprehensive analogical model (theory) which most coherently and neatly illuminates the empirical data.

This beginning exploration into the nature of symbols and metaphors in Mississippian public ritual will explicitly consider both rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960 (1909)) and rites of intensification (Chapple and Coon 1942). Rites of passage constitute a general class of non-calendrical ritual (Wallace 1966:71; Fortes 1962) generally performed to accompany individual changes of status, office or physical location (e.g. puberty rites, marriages, and funerals). These may or may not be communal (Titiev 1960). Rites of intensification are always communal, normally calendrical rituals in which the status of the group as a whole is changed (e.g. new year's celebrations, holidays, and annual harvest ceremonies). These two general types have in common a three-phase diachronic structure, demonstrating symbolic separation, transition, and reaggregation (Van Gennep 1909).

Finally, there is some vagueness and uncertainty in the archaeological literature over just what constitutes "Mississippian". Most generally, it includes the majority of Southeastern United States archaeological cultures of the post-A.D. 900 period. Some investigators

have recently begun to doubt the appropriateness of the common usage of this reified taxon, which has grown by accretion over the years and has come to include a large number of apparently dissimilar manifestations. Others have tried to restrict the more common usage by suggesting certain definitive criteria, but this exercise only ends in the creation of untenable boundaries. I prefer to leave the concept relatively open, except to suggest that its two most important characteristics are 1) a chiefdom level of social organization, implying both social ranking and an economy capable of supporting it; and 2) participation in a distinctive Southeastern platform mound ceremonialism, which will be partially defined later on. While these characteristics are not always explicitly demonstrable in specific cases, they best approximate, in my opinion, the most popular current use of the term.

Now, as a general outline to what will follow, the discussion will be arranged into several largely independent chapters, each addressing a selected topic relevant to the broader domain of Mississippian period ritual. The strategy in laying out materials and their interpretation will generally be to discuss in some detail a small number of carefully selected examples taken from the broader corpus of potential data. This, I think, is justifiable vis-à-vis the other alternative, a survey or quantitative approach, insofar as the examples selected have broad relevance or special significance in clarifying key concepts; I have tried to make this relevance clear in each case, and have made much use of materials with which I have firsthand familiarity.

Following a literature review, the course will be first to search for a set of core symbols or an organizing metaphor within a post-Mississippian text, a Muskogee migration myth. This will be accomplished

by separating the metaphorical and metonymical dimensions of the myth by means of the structural method. The first and main test of these symbols against Mississippian data will take the form of a treatment of the major objective feature of Mississippian ritual: the platform mound. Such mounds, in their various sociocultural contexts, will be seen to clearly embody the substratum of symbolism brought out in mythological form. Next will be an exploration of the use of deliberate change diachronically within a platform mound center. Such behavior will be shown to relate to definite notions of time, the representation of "this:other" or "we:they" ideas, and to notions of change and pollution. This will be followed by two rather more divergent topics: the first an abstract consideration of the possibilities for recognizing meaning in the arrangement of ritual space; the second an analysis of a major rite of passage, the funeral, based upon historic Choctaw data. Finally, an attempt will be made to summarize the major symbolic features of Mississippian public ritual and to relate them to what seem to be two distinct organizational or institutional spheres, perhaps generally identifiable as chiefly ritual versus priestly ritual.

CHAPTER II
EARLIER PERSPECTIVES ON MISSISSIPPIAN EXPRESSIVE CULTURE

It will be worthwhile reviewing some of the conclusions of those investigators, Swanton, Waring, and Howard, who have approached the topic of Mississippian ritual largely without the burden of functionalist preconceptions. Among their insights, which are variously based, may be found previews of themes to be developed further in the present essay. Their influence is accordingly acknowledged along these lines. While none of them may be said to have held special theoretical interests in symbolic aspects of culture per se, their researches clearly exhibit emphases on structural relationships of meaning in the interpretation of both archaeological and historical manifestations.

Had John R. Swanton not been encumbered by the gross lack of Mississippian archaeological data at the time of his major work on Creek Indian beliefs, he would undoubtedly have carried much further than was then possible the diachronic structural comparison of the two complementary sets of data: historic and prehistoric. Swanton was the foremost authority of his time on the form and variation of Creek ritual practices (1928a, 1928b), based both upon his own ethnological fieldwork among the Oklahoma Creeks (1911-1912) and his exhaustive research in Southeastern ethnohistory while affiliated with the Bureau of American Ethnology.

His thoughts on the nature of Mississippian ritual are summarized in a brief essay, "The Interpretation of Aboriginal Mounds by Means of Creek Indian Customs" (1928c). The thrust of that essay has its historical basis in the lingering bias that immediately prehistoric

ceremonialism in the Eastern United States, as manifested at abandoned centers dominated by large earthworks, was somehow qualitatively different in its elaboration and extensiveness, and reflected a higher level of cultural development, than anything seen among the historically encountered aboriginal groups.

This bias was simply a milder restatement of the myth of cultural retrogression largely put to rest by Cyrus Thomas in the last quarter of the 19th century (Willey and Sabloff 1974:49), of which some versions survive today. Swanton himself often referred to the modern Creek ceremonial practices as "attenuated", but this was in reference to ethnohistorical accounts of comparable events prior to the Removal and generally untouched by white interference. It is clear that Swanton believed that the attenuation over the years of elaborate ritual practices was due as much to population decline and displacement as to any normative shifts in belief among its practitioners, and that he recognized the distinction between qualitative retrogression in an evolutionary sense, and, on the other hand, the effects of colonization and acculturation.

Swanton set out to rectify this bias and to establish definite links between prehistoric mound building practices, the accounts of early travelers such as the De Soto chroniclers and William Bartram attesting to mound construction among historic chiefdoms, and the ceremonial practices of modern Southeastern groups. He noted that the Yuchi, the Seminole, and the Oklahoma Creeks have in modern times built small ceremonial mounds for use in calendrical rites of intensification, principally their respective "green corn" ceremonies (Witthoft 1949), and that the Tuckabatchee have also engaged in a type of earth platform

ceremonialism related to traditional dancing. Swanton saw in such practices clear analogs in prehistoric mound building, through making the crucial observation that the act of prehistoric mound construction itself, and not just the final product, reflected important community ritual and contained evidence of religious beliefs of the same character as those held by modern Creek Indians. He felt justified in seeking, within the ethnological materials, models accounting for the earlier practices.

Swanton points out that William Bartram, whose Travels during the Revolutionary War contributed so much to the popular notion of a prehistoric "Mound Builder" race and civilization, had himself prepared for publication a drawing showing an early eighteenth century "Creek" ceremonial ground complex in which both the square ground and rotunda were situated upon earthen platform mounds. They were located on the opposite ends of a bounded "chunkey yard" similar to the ball grounds in use at a later time. This American Ethnological Society publication, however, was never widely distributed. All but about 25 of its original copies, printed in 1853, were destroyed by fire, and it was not reprinted until 1909 with the revival of that society. The "ancient" ceremonial grounds illustrated by Bartram are arguably based wholly or in part on the arrangement seen by him in July of 1775, at the then-abandoned "ancient Apalachucla" on the Chattahoochee River. This was the Hitchiti speaking Apalachicola town of the period ca. 1715-1755. There Bartram witnessed "the mounds or terraces, on which formerly stood their town house", and he also visited an older, adjacent site at which there was a large, rectangular platform mound conjoining a slightly sunken "chunkey yard" (Harper 1958:246). Swanton here

implies that Bartram was fully aware of historic platform mound ceremonialism among the Southeastern Indians, but diminished it in his accounts so as not to draw credence from a more romantic, "lost Mound Builder race" hypothesis. Bartram was, of course, not the last to ignore such evidence for contact period mound building. Swanton reviews this evidence, citing Garcilaso, Adair, and French accounts of Natchez and Tunica platform mounds, some of which had been widely circulated at an early date.

In attempting to account for the variability among the outward manifestations of Mississippian ceremonial centers, i.e. among platform mound-plaza arrangements, Swanton made an important observation critical to their modern analysis. Briefly, it is this: variability in such arrangements is analogous to the kind of variability found among modern Creek ceremonial grounds (Swanton 1928a), that is, the apparent uniqueness of many such arrangements is simply due to spatial recombination of a small number of essential elements. These elements, for Creek ceremonial grounds, he identified as 1) the square ground, which could be oriented with either sides or corners opposite cardinal points; 2) the rotunda or "hot house", which was a usually circular building variously positioned with respect to the square ground; and 3) a "chunkey yard" or ball ground, which was a bounded, open space for various public rituals, dominated by a large, isolated ball post.

Swanton sought analogs for these elements among documented, complex Mississippian centers including Myer's Gordon Group in central Tennessee, the Selsertown (now Emerald) mound group in Mississippi, Squier and Davis' Prairie Jefferson (now Jerden) group in Louisiana, the Taylor Shanty group in Arkansas documented by Cyrus Thomas, and

finally the large St. Louis and Cahokia ceremonial centers. He was at a disadvantage both in his selection of more complex centers, whose final forms represent decades or centuries of accretion, and in the fact that none of the sites had seen a useful amount of professional excavation (Moorehead's report on Cahokia appeared in 1928, the same year as Swanton's essay). These comparisons were explicitly tentative, and intended only to illustrate his point that uniformity could be found within apparent diversity, and that this uniformity conceivably consisted of familiar elements arranged and recombined in various ways.

A final obstacle to comparison was the magnitude of the prehistoric earthworks vis-à-vis the seemingly different modern mound building efforts of insignificant scale. In answer to this Swanton proposed that the large earthen platforms could have been erected in ritual contexts similar to those in which modern mound ceremonialism occurred—that is, in the context of annual rites of intensification such as the busk (Swanton 1928a), in which large resident and non-resident populations could be mobilized. Although he was perhaps unaware of the almost universal periodicity inherent in Mississippian mound construction, he was correctly suggesting that their erection constituted periodic, public ritual of the same kind, if not the same scale or frequency, as that still practiced among the Creeks. In this contextual respect, the small ceremonial and dance mounds made by modern Indians of the former Creek Confederacy might be linked to their massive prehistoric counterparts. This implied, importantly, that the ultimate use of the mound in both cases might be of less symbolic consequence than the circumstances of its erection. Swanton summarized his argument as follows:

> We may conclude, then, by saying that the historic ceremonies and ceremonial mounds of our southeastern Indians, or, for that matter, of the Creeks alone, suggest psychical and technical forces sufficient to account for all of the mounds of the Mississippi Valley and the districts north of the Gulf of Mexico (1928c:506).

The same diachronic problem was also a subject of inquiry for Antonio J. Waring, Jr., building on Swanton's observations on Mississippian ritual. Waring's initial interest was in the iconography of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (or as he called it, the Southern Cult). This is a set of ostensibly related artistic motifs, both representational and abstract, which normally occur in late, ritual contexts (Waring and Holder 1945). This interest was expanded in a later paper (Waring 1968) treating the much broader topic of relationships and possible relevance of historic Creek ceremonialism and mythology to Mississippian forms. The latter paper, "The Southern Cult and Muskhogean Ceremonial: General Considerations", is the major source of his comments relevant to the present essay.

Much of that paper is devoted to Southeastern Ceremonial Complex iconography and to the "Muskhogean" traditions and myths which he felt illuminated them. "Muskhogean" here seems to be a confused usage referring at once to the language family, the specific language, and the loosely-knit town group of the Creek Confederacy, all bearing that name. Waring was convinced that the spread of the Complex could be linked to "a common ceremonial in the historical accounts of the Muskhogean people". He pointed out that groups speaking Muskhogean (family) languages held territories roughly corresponding to the area within which Southeastern Ceremonial Complex iconography was found. Also, mirroring what was known of the "Mississippian radiation" at

the time, Waring noted that some Creek migration legends specified that their respective "ceremonials" were obtained at an earlier time in the Middle Mississippi drainage, prior to an eastward migration. He therefore tended to accredit the "cult-bringer" myths of such groups as based on fact. The historical variability among specific elements of calendrical ceremonies in different parts of the Southeast could be accounted for, he reasoned, by the attrition through time of this "basic Muskhogean ceremonial" (the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex) and the addition of "extraneous material".

There are difficulties with these aspects of his argument, partly stemming from the confusion surrounding the usage "Muskhogean people", in context implying some former cultural whole vis-à-vis other cultures. This, unfortunately, is an illusion no matter how "the Muskhogean people" are defined. While there is much to recommend the idea that some Mississippian manifestations represent peoples of the Muskogean linguistic family, Waring's notion that such towns as Tuckabatchee, Kasihta, and Coweta were the originators and carriers of a "basic" Mississippian ceremonial complex lacks support. It has been strongly suggested that, in various places, Siouan, Iroquoian, Timucuan, Yuchi, and Caddoan speaking peoples were also responsible for Mississippian archaeological cultures, and there seems to be no reason to suppose that speakers of the various Muskogean languages had any monopoly on the iconography in question. In historic times, conceptually equivalent green corn ceremonialism freely transcended linguistic boundaries, suggesting the possibility that Mississippian rites of intensification, as a class, crossed linguistic barriers in similar fashion.

These problems aside, Waring proceeds to attempt, after Swanton, to trace the elements of the Creek ceremonial grounds back to their Mississippian prototypes. In this he achieves considerable success, putting to use the archaeological data gathered during the Depression years. To the three elements discussed by Swanton, the square ground, rotunda, and ball ground, Waring adds a fourth, the mortuary temple. He marshals evidence attempting to document the historical development of each of these elements.

Much of Waring's most innovative thinking appears in his interpretation of the square ground complex. This he felt was derived from a large, rectangular "town house" structure type found on Mississippian platform mounds, typified by the structures found archaeologically at the Hiwassee Island Site in Tennessee (Lewis and Kneberg 1946).

Evidence presented in support of such a derivation is as follows. Firstly, the interior benches of the square ground were referred to as "beds", the same term used for the low benches (also used as beds) found along the interior walls of houses. Similar interior benches are commonly encountered in the ethnohistorical literature, and evidence for them is known archaeologically within large, public "town houses" on mound summits. Secondly, a common name for the square ground was *tcoko-thlako*, translated as "big house". While most historic square grounds consisted of four isolated "cabins" surrounding an open square with a central fire, Waring cites Swanton and Adair to the effect that some squares were formerly covered or enclosed under a single roof. Thirdly, Bartram's sketch of an "earlier" Creek square ground mound platform supports a connection with platform mound ceremonialism.

This established, a prototype for the square ground complex may be found in the large, semi-public chief's houses known both ethnohistorically, and by inference, archaeologically.

Waring found a possible archaeological equivalent for the "holy of holies" of the square ground, the rear chamber associated with various taboos in which ceremonial paraphernalia was kept, in the enclosed rear chambers found associated with buildings on mound summits at Hiwassee Island. These Mississippian buildings faced eastward, and were paired on mound summits in a manner suggesting to Waring the moiety structure of Creek social organization.

More convincing is his demonstration that the periodicity of Mississippian mound construction is conceptually analogous to rites of renewal in the annual busk ceremonies of the Creeks. The busk emphasizes the removal of accumulated pollutions of the past year, including the ritual renewal of the square ground. This involved at one time the creation of a new surface by replastering the four cabins with clay, and by either sweeping, or more suggestively, adding a blanket of sand to the central court. Elements of the busk, then, according to Waring, could be shown to be "survivals" of mound ceremonialism, since the periodic addition of mound mantles achieved the same effect, and the mound-square ground connection was already made. Mississippian mound mantles, Waring noted, were designed primarily to cover all previous structures.

> The conclusion. . . is that the sealing off of the old structure was more important than the purely architectural consideration of creating an imposing temple foundation (1968:58).

The implication of this argument is clear. Mississippian mound building

was primarily a symbolic, ritual activity in the same tradition as the busk (which Waring thought its direct descendant), guided by similar conceptions.

He was consequently disturbed that typical Mississippian mantle addition was clearly not annual activity, but instead represented intermittent intervals of longer span. In response he suggested, rather implausibly, that such activity was initially more frequent, but became less so through time because of increasing cost and inefficiency of mantle addition as the mounds grew in size.

For the Creek rotunda or "hot house", Waring found a prototype in the large circular structures found at some Mississippian sites. He was particularly impressed with the comparability of the typical Creek *tokofa*, and the circular, Early Mississippian earth lodge at Macon, Georgia (Fairbanks 1946).

Waring's fourth element of the Creek ceremonial grounds, the mortuary temple, he thought to have passed out of existence among the Muskhogeans in early historic times. This complex was defined archaeologically at such charnel house-mortuary platform mound sites as Mound C at Etowah (Moorehead 1932:66-87) and the Hollywood Mound (Thomas 1894:317-326), both in Georgia. Ethnohistorical examples included the "temples" at Talimeco, visited by De Soto, and at the Grand Village of the Natchez, described by Du Pratz. For the former, and apparently also for the archaeological examples, Waring accepted an identification as "Creek", in concert with his attribution of the complex as a whole to an early Creek level. That identification, however, is exceedingly tenuous, and the term Creek is completely inapplicable to any time period prior to the eighteenth century. For this reason we

must discount it, while recognizing on the other hand that the isolation of a distinctive type of Mississippian mortuary ceremonialism is important and justifiable.

In sum, two of Waring's conclusions, building on the earlier interpretations of Swanton, are most directly relevant to our purposes. These are; 1) the identification of the square ground complex with the common class of large, semi-public chief's houses recognized archaeologically on mound substructures, and 2) the recognition of a conceptual affinity between historically recorded rites of renewal associated with green corn ceremonialism and the addition of platform mantles at Mississippian sites.

James H. Howard's (1968) concern has again been mainly directed toward the interpretation of Southeastern Ceremonial Complex motifs by means of modern Southeastern Indian practices and ethnohistorical documentation. His discussion, however, contains some additional items of interest in this investigation of Mississippian public ritual. Howard, like Waring, considers Southeastern green corn ceremonialism a "relatively pure survival" of Mississippian mound ceremonialism. He discusses four structural elements of Creek, Seminole, Natchez, Yuchi, and Chickasaw ceremonial grounds. These are; 1) the square ground, 2) the rotunda or hot house, 3) the ball pole and ball ground, and 4) one or more small earthen ceremonial mounds (cf. Swanton 1928a), "usually associated with the calling of the birds feature of the feather dance [at the busk] and with the Buffalo dance" (Howard 1968:124).

Of the Mississippian counterparts of the first three, Howard reviews the evidence largely presented earlier by Waring, with some amplification. He thus discusses the square ground - ball ground

arrangements in relation to mound-plaza arrangements at Mississippian sites, and again notes the probable relationship of the historic rotunda to various Mississippian circular structures. On the topic of ball poles, he adds a note that foundation pits for large, ceremonial, isolated posts have been found at some Mississippian sites, notably the Mitchell site near Cahokia (Porter 1969).

Howard's comments on the small ceremonial mounds found in association with modern square grounds are of considerable interest. In 1965, Howard found examples of such mounds at various square ground sites in Oklahoma. Those he and his associates saw were "two or three feet high and about five feet in diameter". He was told by a native informant that "they are referred to as *táčo fè·ki* [="mound heart"] and are considered the heart of the (square) ground by the Creek". Howard was also told that if the square ground was moved, the ceremonial mound would have to be rebuilt at the new location. He noted that a number of busk-related ritual activities make use of it. He concludes,

> Whether these small present-day tumuli are derived from the giant temple mounds of Mississippian times remains to be demonstrated. Their continued presence and strong ritual associations would certainly argue in favor of this interpretation (1968:149).

Of the ritual nature of these small mounds I will have more to say elsewhere.

A number of modern investigations of Mississippian ritual, none of which will be reviewed here, eschew any concern with content and meaning in favor of various functionalist preoccupations. They generally make use of ethnographic analogy to point out that the rites of intensification represented by Mississippian ritual features and structures probably functioned; 1) as modes of heightened exchange,

redistribution, and information transfer during periods of maximum productivity, and 2) as events sanctifying and solidifying political offices in complex social systems. These aspects of Mississippian ritual are undeniably important, although these approaches uniformly fail to credit the ritual process and structures with their role as analogical models of aspects of the world, that is, as contemplative devices. The symbolic repertoire they reflect clearly mediated, at a deep level, actions which had "functional" significance from a materialist perspective. Far from being "masking superstructures" rationalizing a cultural world of necessity, the symbolism of Mississippian ritual undoubtedly provided the very imagery by which and through which day-to-day problems of existence were formulated and solved. It was in this basic sense a flexible and adaptive means of dealing with the experiential contradictions and disharmonies faced in changing physical and social environments.

Functionalist models of ritual are inherently ambiguous and cannot come fully to grips with the content of their object, because they invariably attempt to define means in terms of apparent ends. These ends are seldom fully justified themselves, and of course any number of means can achieve the same ends (Guthrie 1980:183n). The statement, for example, that a given calendrical ritual functions as a rationale for heightened exchange or communication neither justifies itself vis-à-vis other possible interpretations, nor accounts for most of the detailed content of the ritual, which in this light seems superfluous. But just such an account is desirable when we realize that ritual systems represent systems for the contemplation of things. They are thereby models for much decision-making, including that with practical

significance for survival as well as that directed toward understanding the nature of things, and these often overlap.

CHAPTER III
ALLEGORY AND CORE SYMBOLS

The analysis will begin with the investigation of a myth. But at once this may seem inappropriate, since more than 300 years separate the myth from most Mississippian cultures. It was observed in the previous chapter that the time difference between historic and Mississippian cultures has tended to deter meaningful use of ethnographic analogy in the study of prehistoric ritual forms. Nevertheless, as we have seen, at some structural level there is comparability, and the same is no doubt true of the relationship of surviving myth to prehistory. Rather than focusing interest in the specific motifs or "story" of the myth, which is known to be rather mutable in an historic sense, we are much more concerned with its underlying structure, which is historically more "robust". Within this structure may be sought the basic terms of Mississippian ritual, recalling that the performance of myth is ritual behavior. This structure should provide a point of departure in identifying and discussing Mississippian core symbols.

It is important, then, to consider more carefully the articulation of myth with the remainder of the domain of public ritual behavior, as we find it manifested at archaeological sites. It has already been said that public ritual is organized within a series of "cult institutions", several of which exist simultaneously for a given society. This is also the social armature for the performance of myth, and types of myth correspond to this organization. There are, for example, cosmogonic myths, culture hero myths, migration myths, healing myths, fairy

tales, and other classes, each of which is performed in a specific organizational context. One task is to identify classes of myth which can be identified with the specific kinds of ritual behavior under consideration.

As a first approximate solution, an hypothesis may be forwarded that the class of myths known as migration legends display underlying structures identifying them with the class of rites of intensification we will mainly consider, namely platform mound ceremonialism. These are not cosmogonic myths; they do not generally deal with such cosmological topics as the origin of the earth or the sky. Cosmogonic myths instead provide "conceptual background" for other classes of myth including migration myths. And migration myths are far more than the distorted oral histories of actual migrations, as some investigators have speculated. Migration myths seem to constitute a class specifically related to ritual procedures for renewal and purification. Their allegorical tales of pilgrimage outline formulas for the resolution of conceptual oppositions to achieve these ends.

Selected for analysis among these, for its wealth of detail, is the well known Chekilli migration legend (Gatschet 1884). Ethnographically, the myth pertains to the Muskogee town of Kasihta, on the Chattahoochee River in southwest Georgia. Kasihta was one of the major towns in the Creek confederacy, where it was a "white" town in the town moiety system. Chekilli styled himself as "emperor of the Upper and Lower Creeks", and delivered the myth as a speech in the presence of Governor Oglethorpe, at Savannah, Georgia, in 1735. The Chekilli migration myth is not the only recorded Southeastern migration myth which could serve the present purpose, but it is perhaps the most colorful. For the Creeks alone, it is paralleled by a number of other myths

originating among various towns (Swanton 1928a:33-75). There are also a number of non-Creek myths, for example the Choctaw migration legend recorded by Lincecum (1904), which would well repay attention in the present light.

The Chekilli legend is translated as follows:

"At a certain time the Earth opened in the West, where its mouth is. The Earth opened and the Cussitaws came out of its mouth, and settled near by. But the Earth became angry and ate up their children; therefore, they moved further West. A part of them, however, turned back, and came again to the same place where they had been, and settled there. The greater number remained behind, because they thought it best to do so. Their children, nevertheless, were eaten by the Earth, so that, full of dissatisfaction, they journeyed toward the sunrise.

"They came to a thick, muddy, slimy river—came there, camped there, rested there, and stayed over night there. The next day, they continued their journey and came, in one day, to a red, bloody river. They lived by this river, and ate of its fishes for two years; but there were low springs there; and it did not please them to remain. They went toward the end of this bloody river, and heard a noise as of thunder. They approached to see whence the noise came. At first they perceived a red smoke, and then a mountain which thundered; and on this mountain was a sound as of singing. They sent to see what this was; and it was a great fire which blazed upward, and made this singing noise. This mountain they named the King of Mountains. It thunders to this day; and men are very much afraid of it.

"They here met a people of three different Nations. They had taken and saved some of the fire from the mountain; and, at this place,

they also obtained a knowledge of herbs and of other things.

"From the East, a white fire came to them; which, however, they would not use. From Wahalle (the South) came a fire which was blue; neither did they use it. From the West, came a fire that was black; nor would they use it. At last, came a fire from the North, which was red and yellow. This they mingled with the fire they had taken from the mountain; and this is the fire they use to-day; and this, too, sometimes sings. On the mountain was a pole which was very restless and made a noise, nor could any one say how it could be quieted. At length they took a motherless child, and struck it against the pole; and thus killed the child. They then took the pole, and carry it with them when they go to war. It was like a wooden tomahawk, such as they now use, and of the same wood.

"Here they also found four herbs or roots, which sang and disclosed their virtues: First, Pasaw (pasa), the rattlesnake root; second, *Micoweanochaw* (miko hoyanidja), red root; third, *Sowatchko* (sowatcko), which grows like wild fennel, and fourth, *Eschalapootchke* (hitci laputcki), little tobacco. These herbs, especially the first and the third, they use as the best medicine to purify themselves at their Busk. At this Busk, which is held yearly, they fast, and make offerings of the first fruits. Since they have learned the virtues of these herbs, their women, at certain times, have a separate fire, and remain apart from the men five, six, and seven days, for the sake of purification. If they neglected this, the power of the herbs would depart; and the women would not be healthy.

"About this time a dispute arose, as to which was the oldest, and which should rule; and they agreed, as they were four Nations, that

they would set up four poles, and make them red with clay which is yellow at first, but becomes red by burning. They would then go to war; and whichever Nation should first cover its pole, from top to bottom, with the scalps of their enemies, should be the oldest.

"They all tried, but the Cussitaws covered their pole first, and so thickly that it was hidden from sight. Therefore, they were looked upon, by the whole Nation, as the oldest. The Chickasaws covered their pole next; then the Atilamas (Alabamas); but the Obikaws (Abihkas) did not cover their pole higher than the knee.

"At that time there was a bird of large size, blue in color, with a long tail, and swifter than an eagle, which came every day and killed and ate their people. They made an image in the shape of a woman, and placed it in the way of this bird. The bird carried it off, and kept it a long time, and then brought it back. They left it alone, hoping it would bring something forth. After a long time, a red rat came forth from it, and they believed the bird was the father of the rat. They took council with the rat how to destroy its father. Now the bird had a bow and arrows; and the rat gnawed the bowstring, so that the bird could not defend itself, and the people killed it. They called this bird the King of Birds. They think the eagle is also a great King; and they carry its feathers when they go to War or make Peace; the red means War; the white, Peace. If an enemy approaches with white feathers and a white mouth, and cries like an eagle, they dare not kill him.

"After this they left that place, and came to a white footpath. The grass and everything around were white, and they plainly perceived that people had been there. They crossed the path, and slept near

there. Afterward they turned back to see what sort of path that was, and who the people were who had been there, in the belief that it might be better for them to follow that path. They went along it to a creek called *Coloose-hutche*, that is, Coloose-creek, because it was rocky there and smoked.

"They crossed it, going toward the sunrise, and came to a people and a town named Coosaw. Here they remained four years, The Coosaws complained that they were preyed upon by a wild beast, which they called man-eater or lion, which lived in a rock.

"The Cussitaws said they would try to kill the beast. They digged a pit and stretched over it a net made of hickory-bark. They then laid a number of branches, crosswise, so that the lion could not follow them, and, going to the place where he lay, they threw a rattle into his den. The lion rushed forth in great anger, and pursued them through the branches. They then thought it better that one should die rather than all; so they took a motherless child, and threw it before the lion as he came near the pit. The lion rushed at it, and fell in the pit, over which they threw the net, and killed him with blazing pine-wood. His bones, however, they keep to this day; on one side, they are red, on the other, blue.

"The lion used to come every seventh day to kill the people; therefore, they remained there seven days after they had killed him. In remembrance of him, when they prepare for War, they fast six days and start on the seventh. If they take his bones with them, they have good fortune.

"After four years they left the Coosaws, and came to a river which they called *Nowphawpe*, now *Callasi-hutche*. There they tarried

two years; and, as they had no corn, they lived on roots and fishes, and made bows, pointing the arrows with beaver teeth and flint-stones, and for knives they used split canes.

"They left this place, and came to a creek, called *Wattoola-hawka-hutche*, Whooping-creek, so called from the whooping of cranes, a great many being there; they slept there one night. They next came to a river, in which there was a waterfall; this they named the *Owatunka-river*. The next day they reached another river, which they called the *Aphoosa-pheeskaw*.

"The following day they crossed it, and came to a high mountain, where were people who, they believed, were the same who made the white path. They, therefore, made white arrows and shot at them, to see if they were good people. But the people took their white arrows, painted them red, and shot them back. When they showed these to their chief, he said that it was not a good sign; if the arrows returned had been white, they could have gone there and brought food for their children, but as they were red they must not go. Nevertheless, some of them went to see what sort of people they were; and found their houses deserted. They also saw a trail on the opposite bank, they believed that the people had gone into the river, and would not again come forth.

"At that place is a mountain, called *Moterell*, which makes a noise like beating on a drum; and they think this people live there. They hear this noise on all sides when they go to war.

"They went along the river, till they came to a waterfall, where they saw great rocks, and on the rocks were bows lying; and they believed the people who made the white path had been there.

"They always have, on their journeys, two scouts who go before the main body. These scouts ascended a high mountain and saw a town. They shot white arrows into the town; but the people of the town shot back red arrows. Then the Cussitaws became angry, and determined to attack the town, and each one have a house when it was captured.

"They threw stones into the river until they could cross it, and took the town (the people had flattened heads), and killed all but two persons. In pursuing these they found a white dog, which they slew. They followed the two who escaped, until they came again to the white path, and saw the smoke of a town, and thought that this must be the people they had so long been seeking. This is the place where now the tribe of Palachucolas live, from whom Tomochichi is descended.

"The Cussitaws continued bloody-minded; but the Palachucolas gave them black drink, as a sign of friendship, and said to them: 'Our hearts are white, and yours must be white, and you must lay down the bloody tomahawk, and show your bodies as proof that they shall be white'. Nevertheless, they were for the tomahawk; but the Palachucolas got it by persuasion, and buried it under their beds. The Palachucolas likewise gave them white feathers, and asked to have a chief in common. Since then they have always lived together.

"Some settled on one side of the river, some on the other. Those on one side are called Cussetaws, those on the other, Cowetas; yet they are one people, and the principal towns of the Upper and Lower Creeks. Nevertheless, as the Cussetaws first saw the red smoke and the red fire, and make bloody towns, they cannot yet leave their red hearts, which are, however, white on one side and red on the other. They now know that the white path was the best for them; for, although Tomochichi was a

stranger, they see he has done them good; because he went to see the great King with Esquire Oglethorpe, and hear his talk, and had related it to them, and they had listened to it, and believed it."

This is a complex myth, and to understand it requires that its narrative format be abandoned as it is presented above. The structure of the myth will become apparent by charting its replicating correspondences, those elements or bundles of elements which repeat in slightly different form throughout the myth, across a two-dimensional matrix. The horizontal dimension of this matrix, the metonymic axis, will contain the narrative, read left to right like a printed text. The replicating correspondences, the metaphoric axis, will be charted as vertical columns. By following this method, the myth may be understood by interpreting the referents of the vertical columns, that is, by examining what the elements in these columns have in common, and then by comparing columns.

The replicating correspondence structure of the Chekilli legend is shown in Figure 1. It may be seen that the myth consists of eight narrative "episodes", which have a common format and comparable elements.

The first episode defines a basic polar opposition of the "nature:culture" type: Earth, as the objectification of a cluster of related images, and Society, as a similar cluster represented by the towns of Kasihta and Coweta. The people emerge from the mouth of the Earth, that is, a former unity is postulated out of which there arises a separation. The remainder of the myth is devoted to finding ways of justifying and clarifying the nature of this separation.

Put another way, the myth addresses a rational paradox arising

AMBIGUOUS OR DISGUISED EARTH MONSTER, returned to or approached	IS RECOGNIZED; REVEALS ITSELF BY A NOISE OR BY ASSOCIATION	IS DANGEROUS: IT DEVOURS PEOPLE	IT IS TAUNTED BY PRESENTING IT WITH A CONTRADICTION	IT IS TEMPORARILY DELAYED (opposed to "oversteering")	IT IS PRACTICALLY OVERCOME (opposite column three)	ITS VIRTUES ARE RECOVERED	FOR SACRIFICIAL USES
The mouth of the Earth, in the west		Twice it eats their children when the people are nearby			The people escape to the west, then to the east		
A mountain with fire (discovered at the end of a red river)	It thunders, and has red smoke, which is a fire	They are afraid of it (named "King of Mountains")				They obtain some of its fire	Compatible only with fire from the north (war)
A pole (discovered on the mountain of red smoke)	It moves, and makes noise		Motherless child (struck against pole; the child dies)			They took the pole	It is a war club (atasi)
Some herbs (discovered on the mountain of red smoke)	They sing, and disclose their virtues						Two of the four herbs are "white" used at Busk, others are "red"
A large, blue bird with a long tail (blue=south)		It eats the people daily (called "King of birds")	Presented with the image of a woman (a false wife)	It goes off, cohabiting with the image, bearing a helpful rat son	Red rat and people conspire: rat chews bowstring of bird	(compared with an eagle)	White feathers used for peace, red for war
A wild beast, at Coosa, a white town, after following white path	It lives in a rock, near a creek which is rocky and smokes	The beast is called "Man-eater"	Motherless child sacrificed, enticed with "false noise"	They lay branches across its path; it rushes through them	It falls into a trap (a man-made pit); it is set afire	Its bones are kept: they are half blue, half red	useful in war
Some people (thought to be "White")	They live at a high mountain, which makes noise during war		white ("peaceful") arrows shot at them; returned red		Houses are deserted; people are submerged in a river		
People with flat heads (thought to be "white")	Near a waterfall, with rocks on which bows are lying		White arrows shot at them, returned red		All but two persons are killed, "white dog" spared	Escapees lead them to Apalachicola (white town)	Apalachicola persuades them to make peace

FIGURE 1: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHEKILLI LEGEND OF KASINTA

from strongly held but contradictory postulates. The argument, which is one of identity-seeking, may be put as follows:

1. People are cultural, not natural beings.
2. But they are born of the Earth. This is an inescapable heritage, and people are therefore symbolically "dirty" (Douglas 1966).
3. They must cleanse themselves of this residual "dirt" in order to affirm their identity as humans.
4. But to completely sever the link, to clearly define an uncrossable boundary between Earth and Society, humans would lose their power. That is because humans must necessarily live in a complex relationship to their natural environment, from which they obtain their means for subsistence. Therefore their power, that is, their success in survival and in the proliferation of non-natural culture, lies in the Earth-Society interface.
5. Their purification, consisting of an attempted divorce with the Earth in search of a completely human, non-animal identity, thus can never be complete. As one Creek Indian put it, "man cannot sell his own mother" (Swanton 1928b:480). The former unity must, in some sense, be reestablished and reaffirmed for the sake of survival, yet at the same time, the Earth must be symbolically overcome and the separation confirmed.
6. This may only be accomplished through compromise measures.

In the initial episode of the Chekilli legend, the separation of Earth and Society is achieved. But there is immediately some ambivalence about the separation, resulting in a division of Society into two groups. One group elects to move to an encampment some distance from the mouth of the Earth, symbolically an attempt at purification, upon

realizing that the Earth has become a hostile entity (it eats their children). A second group, however, elects to remain behind, symbolically in the direction of compromise. But Earth does not discriminate, and devours their children also, forcing them to follow the lead of the others and escape to the east, completing the separation.

While the Society-Earth division is in relatively abstract terms, it may immediately be seen that there is an analogy to this separation in the more concrete realm of social organization among the Muskogee towns. The Chekilli legend refers specifically to the sister towns of Kasihta and Coweta, and these historically belonged to two opposing town moieties. The division of Society in this and other Southeastern myths into an advance body and a hesitant body left behind, must refer to this social division.

The town moiety with which Kasihta was affiliated was represented by the color white, and was characterized by an attitude of peace and purity. The opposite town moiety, to which Coweta belonged, was likewise represented by the color red, and an attitude of war. The two moieties were mutually indifferent or hostile, and were opposed in the traditional ball game (Swanton 1928a:249-259).

The Muskogee moiety division helps substantially to illustrate the process by which the basic polar categories proposed in the myth are assimilated to a concrete phenomenon, in this case dual social organization. That this requires an assimilation of imagery rather than a simple metaphorical transfer of symbols is clearly shown by the fact that the whole social domain should properly fall toward the abstract pole we have termed Society. But here, Society itself is unfolded and is shown to harbor elements which belong properly to the "Earth" nexus

of ideas. Thus in the Chekilli legend, the color white represents Society and purification (the white path), while red is the color of the opposite term, hostile Earth. But in the assimilated, institutional form these color terms are transformed: white now represents Society in its warlike (Earthlike) mode. This relationship is diagrammed in Figure 2. The example reveals in a clear way the nature of the fundamental opposition. Rather than constituting definite, concrete symbolic notions to be applied directly to experiential phenomena, the "core symbols" and organizing metaphors are instead whole complexes of indefinite but powerful imagery held in opposition. It is this imagery, and not the specific symbolic predictions such as those which occur in association with colors, which is important where these ideas surface in objective form. Similar assimilations are expectable, and in fact occur, within other ritual domains.

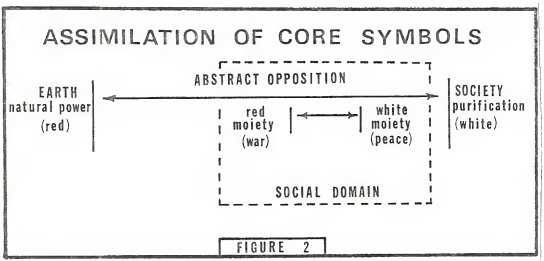


FIGURE 2

Interestingly, the myths attribute to the "red" moiety (accepting this identification) a tendency for hesitating, for being left behind, or for following and then turning back. The opposite social unit, the "white" moiety, has a similar tendency for "overstepping". This correlates with the observation that historically, the town of Kasihta

was located on the east bank of the Chattahoochee River and Coweta on the west bank. The direction east, in the myth, is associated with the Society/purification pole and is the direction of migration, while west is associated with Earth.

Proceeding with the analysis of the Chekilli legend by columns (Figure 1), it can be seen that the first column is about Earth. Earth represents itself to society in various manifestations, but repeatedly in an ambiguous or disguised form. After the initial episode, Earth appears only once in "earth-like" form (as a burning mountain), twice in vegetable form (as a pole and as some herbs), twice in animal form (as a monstrous blue bird and as a wild beast), and twice in quasi-human form. The disguises are of such a nature as to cause non-recognition of Earth; the monstrous bird is blue, not red; the wild beast is discovered at Coosa, a white moiety town, after following a white path; both groups of supposed "people" encountered by Society are "thought to be white", but investigation proves otherwise in both cases. Here red Earth poses as its polar opposite: white Society.

In the second column, these disguises are seen through and the Earth manifestations reveal their true identity. This recognition comes through a number of signs, including revealing the color red, smoking, making a noise, or revealing an association with mountains, rocks, or warfare.

The masquerade now revealed, the hostility and dangerous quality of Earth is made apparent to Society in the third column. The mouth of Earth eats the people's children; the people are afraid of the fiery mountain ("King of Mountains"); the monstrous blue bird devours people daily ("King of Birds"); the beast at Coosa town is called "man eater".

The fourth column concerns actions taken to thwart this danger, and to simultaneously solve the paradox of separation. The people accomplish this by acting in a manner directly inverse to the behavior shown by Earth. Earth's disguises generally take the form of nature mimicking culture. The fiery mountain sings, the pole moves and makes constant noise; the herbs sing; the final two episodes have Earth mimiking Society itself, as people living in villages.

Now the people confront Earth in column four with similar absurdities, entities which are neither natural nor cultural. Twice a "motherless child" is sacrificed. Once, Earth is presented with a "false wife". In the episode of the wild beast of Coosa, the beast is enticed with a rattle. Rattles are made from natural materials, for example, a gourd and stones, and they make a noise which mimics natural noises, and yet they are cultural products and are used culturally. This ambiguity makes them ideal as nature-culture boundary markers (Leach 1976:62-63). They make natural noise culturally, as opposed, for example, to the singing herbs of the myth which make cultural noise naturally. The white arrows used in the final two episodes constitute a parallel absurdity. Arrows are instruments of war, and shooting them into a village is certainly a hostile act. Yet the arrows are initially white, the color associated with peace. All of these devices are ambiguous with respect to the imagery defined earlier. By being neither one nor the other, neither here nor there, they are appropriate mediators, or rather, symbols of mediation of the two polar terms.

In the fifth column, Earth responds by being temporarily delayed. This delay is parallel to the hesitating or trailing behind noted earlier for the "red" town moiety in certain myths.

The sixth column sees Earth overcome by Society as a result of the behavior in column four. In this defeat the emergence of Society from Earth is fully accomplished, and the earthly dominance appearing in column three is reversed. In the sixth and seventh columns, the virtues of Earth are recovered by Society for various useful purposes. That is, the resolution of the initial paradox is accomplished; Earth is on the one hand overcome through cultural boundary-marking behavior, and Society emerges as a distinct entity, yet the virtues of earth, which are necessary for survival, are retained and the link is in a sense preserved.

Now, to compare the relations between the columns, we may diagram the progress of the myth in overcoming the initial paradox, the irreconciled nature of the two initial terms, Earth and Society.

CHEKILLI LEGEND: DIALECTIC PROGRESSION

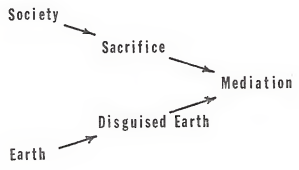


FIGURE 3

The two principal terms, Earth and Society, are replaced in the myth by two other terms, both of which are characterized by some sort of compromise; cultural behavior is "naturalized" through a special kind of boundary-establishing sacrifice; natural entities are similarly compromised in the direction of culture. That is, nature becomes

anthropomorphized. This second set of terms in turn allows mediation, in which Society emerges as distinct and potentially purified through sacrifice, and also through this sacrifice is able to retain some of the benefits of Earth's powers (e.g. success in hunting, fishing, or war).

If this interpretation is roughly correct, and if this mythological structure has the time depth we have suggested, we should be able to perceive these or similar terms in Mississippian ritual behavior. As it happens, this is exactly the case. By keeping these terms and relations in mind, we have a ready guide to the interpretation of platform mound ceremonialism.

Summarily, the Chekilli legend is, ostensibly, about the intellectual problem of autochthony, and the ritual means of overcoming it in establishing human identity. Further, the myth prescribes the kind of ritual procedure and the kind of symbols employed in accomplishing this "defeat" of earth ties. But, as the points of correspondence of the myth to the town and moiety system show, its performance and the consequent revelation of its implicit cosmological categories and boundaries are not simply intellectual riddles; they have direct practical significance. With the limitations of the present data we cannot fully trace out these implications for social regulation. But we may know something of their scope and influence as reflecting a world-constituting system of thought. Durkheim, in his project of demonstrating the social origins of classificatory systems, argued that the powers of the cosmos, both hostile and beneficent, were fundamentally the products of social conventions. Cosmological entities were set up, granted autonomous existence, and placed in reserve as conceptual background, in order to insure that these conventions of interaction would survive (1915).

To violate them would be to do the unthinkable—to profane the sacred, unleashing a powerful moral backlash. For Kasihta, the rules of social existence governing kinship (the moiety-phratry-clan system), rank, and exchange were undoubtedly hedged by supernatural sanctions. Here Earth was depicted as a hostile monster to be placated, ready to inflict harm and pestilence should directives governing marriage, relations with outsiders, production, rank, and war be sidestepped. The polar imagery of Earth and not-Earth constituted a sacred axis on which the decisions and rules of social existence could be played out. As in all cosmologies, this was a shared, normally implicit system of unquestioned knowledge of self-evident truths (Douglas 1975). Our interpretation of these symbols, while admittedly very roughly worked out and tentative in this form, is nevertheless central to any understanding of Mississippian ritual behavior as a manifestation of the high tradition of Southeastern cosmology.

This developing portrait of paradigmatic imagery associated with Earth:Society core symbolism is clearly relatable to a model of Southeastern Indian cosmology independently derived by Charles Hudson (1976:122-69). There seem to be some significant divergences between the present formulation and Hudson's, however, and so this relationship requires some attention and clarification.

Hudson's model is, first of all, a composite sketch intended to portray a generalized Southeastern Indian view of the nature of the cosmos—thus glossing over minor differences in the diverse mythological sources which address this topic. But despite the intended generality, it is nevertheless clear that the model is directly inspired by

cosmogonic myths which are specifically Cherokee. Many of its particular elements are corroborated by sources from other Southeastern groups, but it should also be made explicit that many are not. This is due undoubtedly to the incompleteness of the record for such groups as the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Natchez, for which we have only bare suggestions of anything resembling the cosmos which Hudson describes. On the other hand, one might suspect that some of the minor elements in his portrayal, e.g. the four ropes from which This World is suspended, or the rock constitution of the celestial dome, are particularly Cherokee and might have little significance in relation to Southeastern cosmology as a whole or to its prehistoric precursors. This criticism aside, there is no doubt that the main features of Hudson's cosmological model correctly represent widely held beliefs of certain antiquity.

Hudson describes the Southeastern cosmos as consisting of three worlds: the Upper World, which existed above the dome-shaped sky vault; This World, i.e. the present, tangible world; and the Under World, which existed below This World. Each of these worlds had distinctive properties and inhabitants, and the Upper and Under worlds were constantly opposed in a state of tension. Besides housing a number of deities of more or less importance, the Upper World and the Under World were each associated with a cluster of related ideas reflecting the opposition. The Upper World was associated with order, expectableness, purity, beneficence, structure, stability and past time. The Under World was associated with a set of opposite traits: "inversions, madness, invention, fertility, disorder, change, and future time." It was the duty of mankind, living in the more recently formed This World, to "strike a balance" between the two (128).

As compared with the paradigmatic imagery derived from the Chekilli legend, the correspondence between the cluster of ideas we have called "Earth" and Hudson's "Under World" are clear. They are for all practical purposes the same idea. Nevertheless the assigned terms are a potential source of confusion: we tend to see "earth" as a manifestation of this, the present, world; and the term Under World seems to exclude the earth's surface, streams, etc. Whatever term we assign this nexus, however, it should be understood that in the belief systems at hand, the earth's surface and surface water are potential manifestations and symbols not of the immediate world, but of the maleficent world below.

The remainder of the comparison is, on a superficial level, more difficult. While the Chekilli legend offers only one further term (Society), Hudson's model has two (This World and the Upper World). At first glance it might seem that the proper equation is Society with This World, but that is on reflection clearly a mistake; Society in the Chekilli legend is an emergent, positively valued entity, while on the other hand Hudson's This World is characterized as effectively neutral. Rather, the imagery associated with Society (e.g. "white" symbolism, beneficent, positive valuation) are largely equivalent to those ascribed to the Upper World. This is resolved by recognizing that for the purposes of the Chekilli legend, temporal society—humankind—is assimilated to the Upper World symbolic nexus in order to effectively oppose it to Earth. The assimilation is not absolute: purification and separation from Earth are not completely achieved.

There is in the last analysis no important disjunction between the two sets of core symbols identified. The Earth:Society opposition,

in terms of underlying imagery, is equivalent to Hudson's Under World: Upper World. Hudson's mediating term, This World, while it is not implied in the Chekilli legend, is logical and probably to be corroborated in the structural analyses of further Southeastern myths.

CHAPTER IV
PLATFORM MOUND CEREMONIALISM

The most distinctive and archaeologically visible manifestation of Mississippian ritual is platform mound ceremonialism, a feature which in large part serves to define Mississippianism. As will be seen, this important rite of intensification embodies a symbolic foundation entirely compatible with that discovered within the Chekilli legend in the previous chapter.

Mississippian cultures, however, are not the only prehistoric cultures in the Southeastern United States to have used earthen platforms in ritual, and so it is necessary to point out the distinction. Earlier Woodland cultures employed platforms commonly in mortuary ritual, where they are found below conical mounds as repositories for disposing the dead. There are a few instances, generally within the Hopewellian Sphere, of platform mounds used as charnel house substructures. Woodland period substructure mounds for other types of buildings, including residences, appear to be either rare or entirely lacking, one possible exception being Garden Creek Mound #2 near Canton, North Carolina. The latter mound, which bears a radiocarbon date of A.D. 805±85 (GXO 593) was built in two stages, with a mass of post molds, pits, and hearths being identified on each surface. The post molds indicate possibly circular buildings on the successive summits. Keel (1972:110) considers Garden Creek Mound #2 to be the earliest true substructure mound in the Southeastern United States. There are possibly analogous situations at such sites as Mandeville (Kellar, Kelly,

and McMichael 1962) and Kolomoki (Sears 1953), but sufficient data are not available to demonstrate the exact nature of the large platforms at these sites.

The class of Mississippian platform mounds may be segregated from these earlier phenomena not only by the contexts of their use, which include a broader spectrum of activities than before, but more significantly in the feature of deliberate ritual rebuilding through the periodic addition of earth mantles. It seems fairly clear that the time depth shown by this feature closely correlates with that of the rise of chiefdom level sociopolitical organizations in the Southeast.

At this point mention ought to be made of potential problems arising in the traditional nomenclature surrounding Mississippian platforms. Largely because of earlier analogies with Mesoamerican pyramids, coming at a time when very little was known about the variability of the Mississippian platform class, there has been a longstanding tendency for investigators to arbitrarily call these mounds "temple mounds". With the extensive excavation of significant numbers of such mounds, however, beginning in the 1930's, it has become increasingly apparent that true "temple" substructures are not the most common type of Mississippian platform. It seems preferable to drop this appelation entirely as it applies to the whole class as defined by their form and rebuilt nature, in favor of simply, "Mississippian platform mounds". Secondarily, as data are available pertaining to the specific social context or contexts in which the platforms primarily functioned, this information may be used to classify varieties. Minimally, there are the following types:

1. Semi-public chief's house platforms (e.g. Mound B at the Cemochechobee site) (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979).
2. Public temple platforms (e.g. Mound C, the Fatherland site) (Neitzel 1965).
3. Mortuary platforms (e.g. the Funeral Mound, Ocmulgee National Monument) (Fairbanks 1956).
4. Charnel house platforms (e.g. the Craig Mound, the Spiro site) (Brown 1966).
5. Earth lodge-town house platforms (in the South Appalachian Mississippian area, e.g. the Coweta Creek Mound) (Ferguson 1971).
6. Residence platforms (see e.g. Kelly 1938:46).
7. Square ground and rotunda platforms (documented in Bartram 1909).
8. Dance platforms (Swanton 1928c, 1932).

These platform types are not immutable nor are they particularly coherent classes as regards form. At the Spiro site in the Fort Coffee area of Eastern Oklahoma, a charnel house platform mound is capped by a conventional "Woodland" conical burial mound. At the same site, residences without substructures are similarly capped by conical mounds, reportedly a common occurrence in the Caddoan area (Brown 1966:118). In this instance, we see burial symbolism alternating between conical and platform mound types. In other cases, it can be demonstrated that Mississippian platform mounds served as substructures for buildings which obviously had different functions, either sequentially or at the same time. The large mound at Hiwassee Island in the Tennessee Valley, for example, supported both quadrilateral "town house" type structures, and circular "rotundas" (Lewis and Kneberg 1946). The same may be said of Mound B at the Cemochechobee site on the Chattahoochee River,

where a single mound stage supported three contemporaneous buildings, each of different form (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979). Finally, it must be noted that a common feature of substructure mounds which otherwise fall into one or another of the categories listed above, is the occurrence of mound stages which lack structures altogether.

All of this suggests that while the variability among Mississippian platform mounds is largely a function of contexts of use, these uses were not always completely stable through time. Thus a mound supporting a chief's house, under changed circumstances could have mortuary uses. But underlying the various social subsystems which defined particular uses of platform mounds, and giving the class coherence in this diversity of uses, is a deeper level of symbolism which crosscut these uses. This in large degree accounts for the formal outward similarity among Mississippian mounds which initially led to their being incorrectly ascribed similar functions.

We must now proceed to define the nature of this underlying symbolism, keeping at hand the core symbols and relations discovered in the Chekilli myth. First, the proposition will be introduced that the platform is a symbol for Earth, one of the two principal terms. Mississippian earth platforms are particularly suitable for use as such symbols. First of all, they are with few exceptions quadrilateral in form and flat on top. The four sides, then, correspond to the four-world-quarters concept in Southeastern Indian cosmology, a concept which finds prehistoric expression as the cross symbol in the Mississippian Southeastern Ceremonial Complex. And as the surface of the earth is flat, so is the surface of the platform mound. As a symbol,

platform mounds might reach appropriately imposing scales, but they remained, importantly, manipulable. Their size, orientation, the nature of their summit features, and their use could all be changed. The efforts of Society to manipulate the platform, that is to manipulate Earth, represent the same theme seen in the Chekilli legend: the attempt to control, defeat, or remove Earth from Society, as Society aspires to purification.

The identification of platform mounds with Earth and the Under World makes comprehensible the report by Schoolcraft's informant (1853 (I):311) that the Chickasaw referred to mounds as "navels". "They thought that the Mississippi was the center of the earth, and those mounds were as the navel of a man in the center of his body." Our use of the term "earth" in English to mean both "the world" and "dirt" obscures the fact that there is no necessary connection between the two concepts. Thus a Muskogee term for "mound", *ekun-hu'lwucē* ("the earth raised in the air") probably refers not to the piling up of dirt but to the symbolic affinity of the artificial mound with Earth. Similarly Choctaw terms used in reference to artificial mounds (*bokko, nânih*) refer equally to hills or mountains, again apparently emphasizing Earth relationships rather than the cultural character of the constructions.

One poorly documented but apparently widespread mode of platform modification was change in orientation through time. This can be documented for a number of reported Mississippian mounds: Cemochechobee Mound B (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979), Angel Mound F (Black 1967), the Jewel site "Area B" (Hanson 1970), and probably the Sixtoe Mound (Kelly et al. n.d.). In general, these changes in orientation from one stage to the next are slight, and they correspond with changes in

superstructure orientation.

While these orientations undoubtedly had meaning, this meaning is not always clear. At a number of sites, there is a definite tendency to orient structures and mounds to the cardinal points. However, Reed (1969), in a survey of Mississippian mound centers, concludes that the orientation of major river courses adjacent to sites was as much a determinant as any other factor. At the Cemochechobee site in Georgia, the orientation of Mound B fluctuated between 70^{o} and 78^{o} east of north, with alignments generally corresponding to various sunrise positions from April to August. In the latter case, it may be that each new construction project was oriented with respect to a current sunrise position during the summer ceremonial season. The affected alignments included all structures located within the Nuclear Zone, or ceremonial/ administrative nucleus of the site.

Although it has at times been conjectured that certain alignments at Mississippian sites have solstitial or equinoctial significance, there have not been, in my opinion, any convincing arguments in support of this case to date. It must be remembered in light of the above that the orientation of an unexcavated mound only represents its terminal orientation, and this may not correspond favorably with earlier mound facings.

The defining mode of Mississippian platform modification is symbolic "burial" by the addition of mantles. And given that the platform is a symbol for Earth, this burial is a symbolic defeat of Earth. By periodically renewing an old, mana-laden platform by completely covering it up, a separation is achieved in time and space from potentially "dangerous" spiritualized entities.

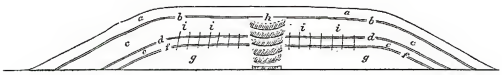


FIGURE 4. CROSS-SECTION OF A CHARNEL HOUSE MOUND: LENOIR SITE.

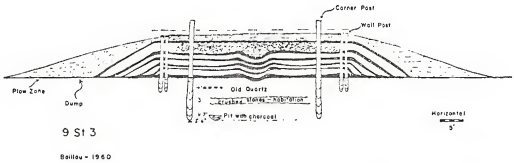


FIGURE 5. CROSS-SECTION OF A TOWN-HOUSE TYPE MOUND: ESTATOE SITE.

There are essentially two kinds of platform mantles: blanket mantles and substructural mantles. Blanket mantles are generally thin coats of earth, sometimes only a few centimeters thick, which completely cover an old construction. They usually bear no summit features, their summits perhaps being left idle for years at a time. This type of mantle most clearly portrays Earth-burial symbolism.

The second type of mantle is not a separate idea, but is rather an elaboration on the simple blanket mantle concept. This is the substructural mantle. It likewise covers all prior constructions, but is further modified to receive a specific number and type of summit structures. Unlike blanket mantles, whose edges, slopes, and flat summit may be

softened or dulled with respect to an ideal geometric form, substructural mantles are generally very regular. They may be very thick, and it is this type of mantle which constitutes much of the volume of many Mississippian mounds.

The possibility of combination of these mantle types within single mounds may be illustrated by the sequence shown in Mound B at the Cemochechobee site. The initial construction, Stage BI, was a low platform of the substructural type housing a structure classified as an elite domestic residence. This was followed in sequence by an interrupted blanket mantle, Stage BII, upon which an irregular, perhaps temporary, building stood. Next came two blanket mantles, Stages BIII and BIV, followed by three successive substructural mantles, Stages BV, BVI, and BVII. Finally, the mound was capped by a succession of three blanket mantles, Stages BVIII, BIX, AND BX. Thus while Mound B at the Cemochechobee site generally served as a foundation for semi-public chief's house type buildings, there were several distinct intervals in its history where the summit lay bare of any structure.

This alternation of mantle types may be contrasted with other Mississippian mounds, for example the large mound at Hiwassee Island on the Tennessee River, where each of the successive mantles seems to be of the substructural type. Nevertheless, the burial symbolism is in each case maintained. Lewis and Kneberg note,

> The Hiwassee Island Focus method of rebuilding the foundation of public buildings suggests, even more clearly than the Dallas culture, that it was done with the intention of renewing the area completely and to cover all evidence of the former architecture. Frequently a new summit barely exceeded in height the highest remaining feature of the previous level and in some instances entirely serviceable clay stairways and platforms were covered by only a few inches of newly added clay (1941:22-23).

There is some evidence at the Cemochechobee site that the planned abandonment of mounds followed a stereotyped pattern of blanket mantle addition in the form of a clay cap. Both the mortuary platform mound (Mound A) and the substructure mound (Mound B) exhibited identical terminal caps consisting of a thick coat of clay overlain by a layer of brown sand. Both of these final caps lacked any evidence of summit features. Correspondingly, there are a number of other reported instances of terminal clay caps on Mississippian platform mounds, all lacking evidence of final structures. This pattern, and the symbolism of the blanket mantle concept, suggest that the planned obsolescence of such mounds required a final ritual burial of the mound itself.

Now it is recalled that the symbolic separation of Society and Earth, which mound ceremonialism ritually accomplishes, ought to be accompanied by some sort of sacrificial mediation, in order to be complete and yet to preserve the beneficial Earth ties necessary for survival. Appropriately the earth (dirt) generally used to construct mantles is not ordinary, unadulterated earth but instead village midden. It is earth full of cultural debris, and is therefore in a sense "compromised earth", belonging fully neither to the realm of Society nor to Earth. It might be suggested, then, that it is this compromised earth which fulfills the mediating role taken by the motherless children or the false wife discovered earlier in myth.

While this may sound far-fetched, there is little doubt that the use of village midden in mound construction as opposed to "clean" mined earth is deliberate in most cases. There is a corollary: borrow pits will always be located <u>within</u> village boundaries. Sometimes the effort to use compromised earth seems exaggerated. For example, the Stage BIIa

construction in Mound B at the Cemochechobee site consisted largely of redeposited hearth ashes, recalling the mound of hearth ashes gathered from busk fires at the Creek Tuckabatchee town (Swanton 1932). In the same construction stage at Cemochechobee were piles of burned daub and other remains of what appeared to be a house burned elsewhere in the village, the debris of which was added to the mound as fill.

Generally, the ritual of platform mantle addition which characterizes Mississippian mound ceremonialism, in its effort to purge Society of undesirable Earth powers, suggests a number of symbolic oppositions, which can be grouped into three categories.

Time Relationships	Space Relationships	Quality Relationships
present:past	surface:subsurface	clean:unclean (dirty)
	(unburied:buried)	(pure:impure)
	close:distant	life:death
		free:bound

The significant metaphors move between these columns. Of the spatial relationships, which find direct expression along the vertical axis of the platform mound, it follows that the depth of burial, that is, the thickness of the mantle, is related to the relative need for thorough purification.

Having intimated that there is a connection between "compromised earth" and the accumulation of undesirable mana, we find that platform mound ceremonialism is symbolically related to those rites of intensification worldwide which employ a scapegoat as an embodiment of spiritual ills. Such rites were early recognized as a class by Sir James G. Frazer, who devoted a volume to the subject as a part of his lengthy work, The Golden Bough (1913). These are, on the whole, aspects of

"rites of separation" in Van Gennep's (1960) framework, on a community scale. They are characterized by a periodic transfer of accumulated "evil" to a publicly designated object, which is frequently an animal or human, but may also be inanimate.

In the present case, the role of the scapegoat is taken by the inanimate platform, and the "compromised earth" which constitutes it is the material symbolically invested with undesirable Earth powers. Purification is achieved by periodically removing this dirt from the village, the realm of Society, and burying it at a place symbolizing Earth.

This kind of behavior may be further illustrated by comparison with an ethnographic example. Selected from among those cited by Frazer is an account of ritual purging of a community among the Hos of West Africa (Frazer 1913:134-136). This annual ceremony is initiated by the chiefs, who summon the priests and shamans to direct the event. The latter create bundles consisting of poles to which leaves of a certain tree are bound by vines. These bundles are then coated by a paste made from ashes, and the priests pray "that all the ills of the town may pass into the bundle and be bound". The bundles are then thrown on the ground, where they are mocked by the community at large. After this, the bundles supposed to contain all the community evils are removed from town and are set up along various roads. Next comes a ritual face-washing by the entire populace, using medicines prepared by the elders. All of the houses and surrounding yards are then thoroughly swept out, with the refuse being cast out of town. This portion of the ritual is completed by binding an animal scapegoat, a toad, to a palm leaf and dragging it through the town in the direction of a certain sacred

mountain. This purging accomplished, the priests announce that they will proceed to remove all sickness from the community. They institute a temporary taboo against lighting fires or eating for one night, and the next morning the houses are again swept clean, with the dirt and hearth ashes deposited on broken wooden plates. The participants then dress themselves in torn mats or worn-out clothing, and upon the announcement of a priest, they shout and run out of town toward the sacred mountain. Upon reaching a specified tree near there, they deposit the refuse they had brought, saying "Out today! Out today! That which kills anybody, out today! You evil spirits, out today! and all that causes our heads to ache, out today! Aulo and Adaklu [the sacred mountain] are the places where all ill shall betake itself!" They then return home and again wash themselves with a ritual medicine, and prepare for the harvest feast.

While these sketchy details do not allow a detailed symbolic analysis, certain features can be recognized. Both animate and inanimate scapegoats are repeatedly used in the purification, and twice the village is cleansed of "contaminated" earth along with other used or worn out objects.

The sweeping out of contaminated or polluted earth is parallel to the early historic Creek preparation of the village and square ground for the annual busk ceremony. Adair describes how the square ground was swept out and cleared "of every supposed polluting thing", with the hearth ashes carefully removed and carried out (Adair 1930:106). Preparations on the household level are particularly noted by Bartram, who says of the Creeks of Atasi, that "having previously provided themselves with new cloaths, new pots, pans, and other household

utensils and furniture, they collect all their worn out clothes and other despicable things, sweep and cleanse their houses, squares, and the whole town, of their filth, which with all the remaining grain and other old provisions, they cast together in one common heap, and consume it with fire" (Harper 1958:323). Milfort adds that the women break and shatter everything that makes up their household goods and furnish their homes anew (Milfort 1959:98). In this case, noting the Earth symbolism involved, earthenware ends its utilitarian lifetime by being treated literally as Earthen-ware, that is, culturally modified Earth (clay).

Turning to the social contexts of platform mound ceremonialism, it will be recalled that both Swanton and Waring surmised a functional equivalence with the Creek busk, or annual harvest ceremony. In the terminology we shall adopt, they were suggesting that such ceremonies constituted rites of intensification.

The term, "rite of intensification," was originally proposed by Chapple and Coon in their textbook, Principles of Anthropology (1942). The concept was formulated to distinguish calendrical, community focused rituals from ordinary rites of passage which generally have individuals or small groups as their subjects. Arnold Van Gennep, in his early work, The Rites of Passage (1960), had not made a clear distinction between the two types of ritual, preferring to concentrate on their structure rather than on their organizational contexts. And structurally, rites of passage and rites of intensification are very similar, sharing a common diachronic formula. They begin with rites of separation, designed to remove the subject or subjects symbolically from the influence of a past condition. Following the rite of separation is a

period of transition which is characterized by role reversal and humility. Turner calls this generalized condition "communitas" (Turner 1969). The third and final phase is one of reaggregation, in which the new status of the subject or subjects is affirmed. The primary distinction, then, between rites of passage and rites of intensification is not one of "differing structure but one of differing goals. Rites of passage are intended to solve problems of status transition arising from the social growth of individuals, whereas rites of intensification are directed toward communicating solutions to the cosmological problem of the difference between one segment of the ritual calendar and the next. These goals may in practice overlap, making the boundary between the two types occasionally fuzzy.

The concept of rites of intensification has found little exposure in the archaeological literature, but Robert Wauchope may be credited with an attempt at using it in his analysis of the Mayan remains at Zacualpa, Guatemala (1948). Wauchope tried to interpret ritual features at this site in terms of archaeologically represented rites of passage (e.g. burials) and probable rites of intensification (e.g. large architectural features which suggested community involvement in ritual).

Platform mound construction, requiring periodic intensive community involvement, is thus comfortably accommodated by the concept of rites of intensification. But just as obviously, Mississippian platform mound construction differs from the historic Southeastern green corn ceremonies in not being annual activity. Apparently spans of several years, probably decades, separate construction levels in Mississippian mounds. At the Cemochechobee site in southwest Georgia, by dividing the estimated duration for the site based on radiocarbon dates by the number

of construction stages, the resulting figure is an average of 21 to 24 years between constructions. It seems that these rites of intensification were, initially at least, non-calendrical, being instead initiated by crisis situations resulting from the buildup of dangerous mana and the increasing need for ritual purging over a space of several years.

In identifying platform mound ceremonialism as a rite of intensification, we may look for archaeological correlates of the three phases: separation, transition, and reaggregation. In general, mantle addition itself is a rite of separation; it serves to symbolically separate through burial. Mantle addition may in some cases be preceded by the deliberate destruction of a superstructure. This may be regarded as yet another manifestation of separation. We have no evidence of transitional rites following mantle addition, but we may suppose that such rites existed which did not leave archaeological evidence. Reaggregation is suggested by the occasional rebuilding of summit features in the location of former summit features, and the whole construction was perhaps rededicated with some concluding ceremony.

In terms of the "cult institutions" mentioned earlier as responsible for different organizational classes of ritual, we may surmise that the type involved here may be identified, using Wallace's classification, as "communal". That is, these rites were community sponsored and actively participated in by the lay public, although specialists were responsible for making the arrangements (Wallace 1966:86-87). It was the community as a whole, rather than some more particular or specialized group, which was the subject of the rite.

The periodicity seen in platform mound ceremonialism presupposes an oscillating view of ritual time, rather than one based on a model of

natural growth and aging or on "progress". Leach (1961) has described such a system, in which time is represented by ritual actors moving back and forth between two conceptual poles. The poles are represented metaphorically by arbitrary markers in time. In the case of platform mound ceremonialism, the subject (the community) oscillates between relative Earth pollution (the situation before the rite of intensification) and the relative purity (the situation after the rite of intensification). The rite itself, then, serves as a boundary marking a change of status for the community with respect to the Earth:Society scale. It emphasizes a transition between a relatively profane and a relatively sacred state.

Beyond saying that the entire community was probably involved in Mississippian platform mound ceremonialism, including mantle addition, there is some evidence pointing to the type of labor organization involved in the mound building projects. Returning once again to the Cemochechobee site in southwest Georgia for an illustration, we note that there seem to be two kinds of mound fill represented in Mound A. These two kinds are exemplified by Stages AII and (later) Stage AIII. The AII mantle is described as a very homogeneous zone within Mound A, consisting of dark brown sand mottled with pale sand (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979:98). The estimated fill volume is 147.6m^3 (ibid:45), and the fill appears to have come from a single source. This is in marked contrast to the overlying Stage AIII mantle. The latter is described as composed of variegated fills from many sources, including sands and clayey sands arranged throughout the zone in large distinct lenses. Each of these lenses represents an estimated two to three cubic meters of fill, that is, each apparently consists of a number

of concurrent basket loads from the same source (ibid:103-104). Stage AIII as a whole had an estimated fill volume of 279.7m^3 (ibid:45). The variety of fills within this mantle suggests that the soil was brought from many areas within the site, some at a considerable distance from the mound.

In the case of the homogeneous mantle, it is possible that a full-time, organized labor crew recruited from the community is responsible, whereas for the variegated mantle, some sort of kin-based quota system may be proposed as plausible, with each unit bringing some amount of earth from various areas within the site until the mantle was completed. Such an organization could easily account for the mantle within the time from a single ceremonial season.

It will be appropriate to conclude this chapter by quoting from the Choctaw migration myth recorded by Gideon Lincecum (1904). The Lincecum myth, which details the supposed emigration of the Choctaws to the site of Nanih Waiya in the state of Mississippi, also contains a prescription for the erection of a mortuary platform mound. This platform was built, as the myth tells it, to rid the nation of an "oppressive" and "evil" accumulation of ancestral skeletons which had been carried along with the people on their journey. The relevant passages are as follows.

"Men were then appointed to select an appropriate place for the mound to be erected on, and to direct the work while in progress. They selected a level piece of sandy land, not far from the middle creek; laid it off in an oblong square and raised the foundation, by piling up earth which they dug up some distance to the north of the foundation. It was raised and made level as high as a man's head and beat down very

hard. It was then floored with cypress bark before the work of placing the sacks of bones commenced. The people gladly brought forward and deposited their bones until there were none left. The bones, of themselves, had built up an immense mound. They brought the cypress bark, which was neatly placed on, till the bone sacks were all closely covered in, as dry as a tent. While the tool carriers were working with the bark, women and children and all the men, except the hunters, carried earth continually, until the bark was all covered from sight constituting a mound half as high as the tallest forest tree.

"The minko [chief] kindled the council fire, and, calling an assembly of the people, told them that the work on the great monumental grave had been prosecuted with skill and wonderful industry. He said that the respect which they had already manifested for the deceased relatives was very great; that notwithstanding the bones were already deeply and securely covered up, the work was not yet completed. Yet it was sufficiently so to allow them to suspend operations for a season. . . . Then, after the corn is grown and the new corn feast and dance is celebrated and over, the nation can again prosecute the work on the mound, and so on, from year to year, until the top of the great grave of the dead nation shall be as high as the tallest forest tree. And it shall be made level on the top as much as sixty steps (halbi) in length, and thirty steps in width, all beat down hard, and planted thick with acorns, nuts, and pine seeds. 'Remember my words;' said the chief, 'and finish the work accordingly. Now go and prepare for winter'.

"The amount of ground necessary to plant what corn they had was small, and was soon planted. Then having nothing else to be working at, a thoughtful old man, pointing to the great unfinished mound

(yokni chishinto) said, 'the weather is cool and pleasant, and the grave of your dead kindred is only half as high as a tall tree". Taking the timely suggestion of the man, thousands went to work, carrying dirt to the great mound at any time they were not engaged at work in their domestic vocations.

"Years rolled round; the work on the mound was regularly prosecuted; and at the eighth green corn dance celebrated at Nunih Waya, the committee who had been appointed at the commencement, reported to the assembled multitude that the work was completed and the mound planted with the seeds of the forest trees, in accordance with the plan and direction of the minko, at the beginning of the work.

"The minko then instructed the good old Lopina, who had carried it so many years, to take the golden sun to the top of the great mound and plant it in the center of the level top.

"The feast and dance, as was the custom, continued five days. After this, in place of the long feast, the minko directed that, as a mark of respect due to the fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters, for whom they had with so much labor prepared such a beautiful and wonderfully high monumental grave, each iska should come to the mound and, setting up an ornamental pole for each clan, hold a solemn cry a whole moon. Then, to appease the restless spirits of the deceased nation and satisfy all the men and women with what they had done with the sacred relics of their dead, the Choctaws held a grand and joyous national dance and feast of two days. And returning to their tents, they remembered their grief no more" (Lincecum 1904:529-532).

CHAPTER V
THEME AND VARIATION

Having considered the symbolic dimension of platform mound renewal, the broader pattern of deliberate change in public ritual "stages" of which it is a part may now be examined. It will be found that, for a given Mississippian community, the ceremonial nucleus is made up of a number of distinct structural elements, and that periodic change is manifested through recombination of these elements in space. One example will be considered in detail, and then the significance of this kind of pattern as it contrasts to the broad, normative shifts to which archaeologists are more accustomed will be discussed.

Selected for particular attention will be the Cemochechobee site, previously referred to briefly. Cemochechobee is located in Clay County, southwest Georgia, on the lower Chattahoochee River. The component of interest here is assignable to the Rood phase, an Early Mississippian construct for the lower Chattahoochee Valley which is dated at approximately A.D. 900 to A.D. 1400. The Cemochechobee site bears 18 radiocarbon dates which place it firmly between A.D. 900 and A.D. 1350, thus spanning most of the range estimated for the phase.

The site, discovered in 1974, was investigated during 1977-1978 by the Columbus Museum of Arts and Sciences, Inc., under contract to the U. S. Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, and to the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. The data herein referred to are largely contained in the unpublished report entitled "Cemochechobee: Archeological Investigations at the Walter

F. George Dam Mound Site, 9Cla62, Clay County, Georgia" (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979). That report contains a more detailed account of the sequence reported in condensed form in the following pages, and includes justifying remarks for many of the generalizations presented here. The author of the present study served as Field Archaeologist for the project.

The Rood phase is poorly known, but evidence suggests that within the Rood phase sphere, Cemochechobee was one of a string of minor ceremonial centers in the Chattahoochee Valley stretching from about Eufaula, Alabama, south to Columbia, Alabama. Each of these minor centers has one to three platform mounds. There are two major, multiple mound ceremonial centers assignable largely to the Rood phase, neither of which has been intensively investigated. Both are in Stewart County, Georgia. One is the Rood's Landing site, briefly excavated by Joseph R. Caldwell (1955); the other is the Singer-Moye site, tested by the Columbus Museum from 1967 to 1971 (Knight 1979).

While classified as a second-order site, Cemochechobee is nevertheless large, with evidence of occupation covering approximately 61 hectares of Chattahoochee Valley floodplain near Fort Gaines, Georgia. Not all of this area was necessarily occupied at the same time, but the expanse and density of village debris nevertheless suggests a permanent community of substantial size. Unfortunately very little of this area has been tested archaeologically, and much of it is now destroyed.

The Columbus Museum excavations at Cemochechobee centered on a small area of the site termed the Nuclear Zone. The Zone is dominated by three platform mounds, designated A, B, and C, and was apparently the ceremonial nucleus of the community and the place of residence of

its administrative body. Extensive excavations within the Nuclear Zone revealed a stratigraphic sequence of 19 discrete stages of rebuilding and reorganization. Four of these stages occurred prior to any mound building within the Nuclear Zone, and the remaining 15 involved the addition of mound mantles.

Within the premound midden zone found beneath Mounds A and B, an Early Premound construction stage could be distinguished, consisting of a number of features all intruded by features of the next stage. Central to this group of features was a large post foundation, equipped with a slide trench to one side, extending down into the basal clay substrate at the site. Evidently this area was at one time dominated by a large, upright isolated pole.

Substantial isolated post pits of this sort are known from other Mississippian sites, associated with mound and plaza groups. Below Mound 72 at the Cahokia site in Illinois, Fowler reports a large post foundation reinforced with horizontal log cribbing. He interprets the former large pole as a marker for the north-south axis of the Cahokia site (1969:19). A similar large post foundation pit was discovered in the central plaza area of the Mitchell site, also located in the American Bottoms area immediately north of Cahokia. Within this post pit the lower portion of a 3½-foot in diameter bald cypress log was recovered. It is interpreted as being the central pole for the Mitchell site (Porter 1969:143). At Ocmulgee National Monument in central Georgia, the excavation of the "Funeral Mound" revealed another isolated large post foundation. This was found on the summit of the primary mound (Fairbanks 1956:24).

The most obvious historic analogs for these prehistoric features are the widespread large poles reported within towns for several Southeastern Indian groups. These large poles were most commonly observed in historic times to be associated with the "single pole ball game". The game involved two teams, generally among the Creeks men versus women, and the object was to strike a target placed atop the pole using a ball (Swanton 1946:681-682).

There is reason to believe, however, that the full symbolic significance of the upright pole among the Southeastern Indians goes well beyond its use in the single pole ball game. For one thing, the pole and its surrounding area, the latter ritually swept of surface debris, constituted one of the three principal units of each Creek ceremonial ground, a sacred context apparently out of proportion to the relatively simple significance of the ball game. Swanton notes provocatively that on occasion the actual games were not played around this sanctified pole, but elsewhere at a second pole apart from the ceremonial grounds (1946:682). Further, there are a number of other contexts in which upright poles play a significant part in Southeastern ethnohistory and folklore. We have already seen that in the Choctaw migration myth furnished by Lincecum, an upright pole serves as an Earth symbol. In the same myth, as in other Southeastern migration myths, an upright pole serves a kind of oracular function, magically determining by the direction it leans the route to be followed by the migrating group. Again in the Lincecum myth cited earlier we find reference to upright poles serving as clan symbols. Finally, Bartram has furnished a plan of an "early" chunkey yard which illustrates two "slave posts" in addition to a central pole, which interestingly is situated upon a low platform mound (Bartram 1909).

In light of the various historical and folkloric references to upright ceremonial poles put to other uses than for the single pole ball game, it is doubtful that the Mississippian examples at Cemochechobee, Cahokia, and other sites can be interpreted as ball poles. And in some cases, as at Cahokia Mound 72 and at the Ocmulgee Funeral Mound, the location of the large post pits with respect to other features argues forcefully against such as assignment.

On the other hand, we must not ignore the possibility of a symbolic continuity for upright poles from prehistoric to historic times. It is distinctly possible that all of these ceremonial uses for upright poles are related to the very widespread cosmological "world tree" complex (Lankford 1975: passim).

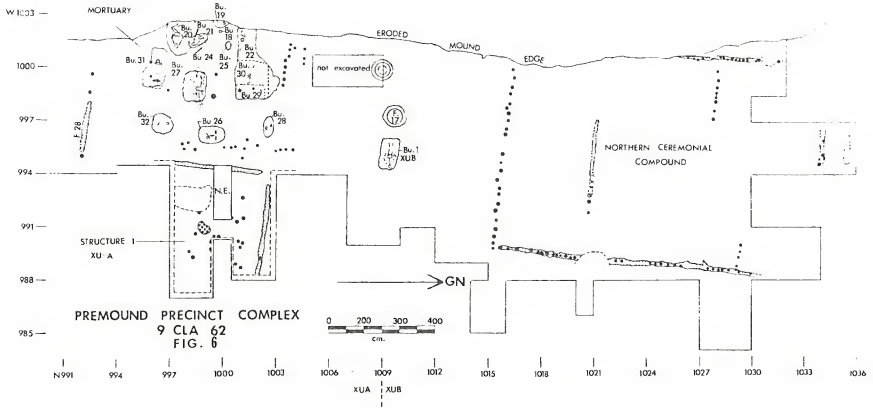
Surrounding the central post foundation of the Early Premound stage at Cemochechobee were a number of other features. Two of these were small pits. One of them contained only a few sherds, but the other yielded an interesting collection of items which set it apart from the abundant refuse pits found in later stages. These items were a fragment of sandstone, several lumps of white micaceous clay, several sherds, and what appeared to be a fragment of a soft fired figurine. These items suggest a ritual context, perhaps a deliberately buried sample of raw materials. Two other features near the central post pit were large pits with similar contents. The upper pit fill of each was nearly sterile, suggesting that they had been dug and immediately filled in again with sterile excavated sand. Near the bottom of each pit was a deposit of ashes. Adjacent to the ash deposit in one of the pits was a very large upturned clam valve. These two pits suggest a ritual burial of hearth ashes, and the clam valve perhaps contained

some prepared "medicine" included as an offering.

The contemporaneity of this cluster of features, which in general hint at ritual rather than common domestic activity, with other features within the premound zone could not be demonstrated with certainty. However, there was one set of premound features, consisting of parallel wall trenches, which could not be correlated with any of the other premound stages and which therefore are likely candidates for an Early Premound assignment. One of these features was a fragment of a wall trench located approximately 15m to the north of the large post foundation. Two other trenches, parallel to this trench and to each other, formed a dual partition to the south of the feature cluster. Apparently none of these trenches were portions of house walls, and together they suggest a walled ceremonial area, 26m in diameter, in which the large pole stood as the central feature.

As this arrangement was dismantled, a new enclosure took its place, defining the second construction stage. This is called the Premound Precinct Complex (Figure 6), because it is during this stage that the division of the Nuclear Zone into two functional parts is first defined. Throughout the subsequent history of the Zone, the southern half was reserved exclusively for mortuary ritual, while the northern half admitted a number of more secular structures including probable chief's houses, special purpose buildings, and ceremonial enclosures.

The central feature of the Premound Precinct Complex was an open-air, puddled clay hearth with a raised rim. This hearth served as the boundary between the northern and southern precincts, and marked the center of a boundary zone between the two. This boundary zone was 6m wide from north to south, in which there were no other constructions.



PREMOUND PRECINCT COMPLEX
9 CLA 62
FIG. 6

Adjacent to and associated with this hearth was an isolated, unique burial. It was placed in a deep, rectangular tomb east of the hearth within the boundary zone. The remains were those of an adult male, fully extended on the back with the head to the east. In his right hand was a long, greenstone "pole spud", probably a rank symbol representing a stylized, sociotechnic war axe. There were no other grave associations except for a small fragment of sheet copper. The burial had been covered in the tomb by four or five logs or bark strips placed lengthwise, and then filled in with soil.

Immediately to the north of the boundary zone was a walled rectangular compound. The eastern and western walls of this compound were set in deep, narrow wall trenches, while the southern wall, facing the boundary zone, consisted of individually set posts chinked with red clay. A gap in the center of this wall indicates an entrance facing the open-air hearth. The northern wall of this compound was beyond the limits of the excavation. Within this compound were a number of partitions, or baffles, set perpendicular to the east and west walls. While there is no direct artifactual evidence in support of a functional assignment for the compound, its form and superimposition on the Early Premound features strongly suggest that it served as a bounded public ceremonial area, perhaps reserved for dances and games. Both this compound and its Early Premound predecessor are best interpreted as analogous to the historically recorded "chunkey yards" of the Creeks, and they apparently constitute an important structural component of the Cemochechobee Nuclear Zone.

To the south of the central boundary zone, opposite the northern compound, were two structures of comparable size. One of these was a wall trench structure with eight central roof supports and an offset hearth. Its most notable attribute was an almost total lack of floor debris, in sharp contrast to most of the other quadrilateral structures at the site. It cannot therefore be interpreted as a domicile, and it must have had some special mortuary use in which the floor area was kept free of any debris.

The adjacent mortuary structure was of single post construction with two probable central roof supports, and a possible narrow porch-like structure to the north. Beneath the floor of the mortuary were 13 burials.

Two classes of burials were recognized from the mortuary floor area. The first class consisted of primary and secondary interments of adults, placed in deep rectangular tombs oriented with the cardinal directions. The second class, consisting of child and adolescent burials, was spatially segregated in the area near the western wall. These secondary remains were placed in both deep and shallow oval graves. Both classes of burials received grave goods, including exotic items made of raw materials foreign to the site area. These included artifacts of marine shell, greenstone celts, and a copper "arrowhead" headdress. Deposits of pottery vessels were found in five instances. If these remains may be attributed to an elite group meriting deposition in the mortuary, as seems likely, then it is apparent that membership in this group was ascribed rather than achieved, since all age groups are represented. This is to be expected in a ranked social system, characteristic of Mississippian societies, and probably in this case it

is the chiefly clan which received mortuary burial.

South of the mortuary and its adjacent building was a final feature assignable to this stage. This was a wall trench bounded by isolated posts, running east-west. With respect to the overall Premound Precinct Complex arrangement, this wall trench seems to have formed part of the southern boundary of the mortuary precinct.

Following the dismantling of the structures just described, there was a functional shift within the northern precinct, which until this time had been the locus for a public ceremonial area. It now became the site of an elite domicile, Structure 7, and together with the features accompanying this building, the stage is called the Structure 7 Complex.

Structure 7 was a rectangular building, with walls set in very shallow trenches. There was a suggestion of corner entrances. The interior contained twin hearths, both of which, along with the floor area, contained abundant evidence of plant and animal food remains. The western wall of Structure 7, unlike the other three walls, consisted of widely spaced posts, and to the rear of the building was another post mold alignment indicating an auxilliary rear chamber or narrow room.

The unprepared floor of this structure was littered with debris, indicating a domestic use. Along with the standard utilitarian pottery fragments, there were fragments of "special" ceramic wares including decorated beaker and bottle sherds. Other artifacts thought to be associated with the floor area included several elbow pipe fragments, a small number of chert retouch flakes, a piece of unworked mica, and an unmodified fossil shark tooth. Of particular interest in the northern half of the floor area was evidence of the manufacture of marine shell artifacts, including scraps of unworked whelk shell, cut

columellae, an unfinished columella bead, and a fragmentary shell disk. The location of Structure 7 within the Nuclear Zone at Cemochechobee, and the kind of remains found associated with it, argue for its assignment to a class of elite, possibly chiefly residences at the site. These buildings are characterized by a combination of domestic debris, such as plant and animal food remains and utilitarian pottery, and specialized remains such as fine decorated ceramic wares, non-local objects such as marine shell, and other artifacts suggestive of possible status differentiation.

Flanking Structure 7 to the north and south were free-standing partition walls, set in narrow wall trenches. These two screens would have shielded the structure from view except from the east, since the back of the building abutted the bluff of the Chattahoochee River. To the north, south, and east of Structure 7 were a series of 13 shallow refuse pits containing miscellaneous domestic debris generally including fish bone and ceramic sherds.

Replacing this elite domicile in the northern precinct was a series of circular structures similar to circular structures encountered at other Early Mississippian sites such as Hiwassee Island and Bessemer. These structures are perhaps analogous to the Creek *tokofa*, or ceremonial council chamber.

There were three such structures identified in the premound zone. Although none of the post mold patterns were complete due to erosion of the bluff on the western side, enough remained to indicate that each pattern formed a true compass circle, with small posts individually set and closely spaced. The largest of these three buildings was 8.96m in diameter, while the smallest measured 6.10m. The only structure whose

axial point survived erosion appears curiously not to have had a central hearth. Unlike the Creek *tokofa*, which had a cone-shaped roof, the circular structures at Cemochechobee were probably dome-shaped, employing a bent pole framework. The floors of each of the structures were not well defined. One case of post mold intrusion showed that one of the three buildings was a replacement for an earlier circular structure, and it is likely that the three were sequentially constructed.

It is clear that the replacement of Structure 7 by a series of buildings probably having non-residential use, perhaps as council chambers akin to the well-known Macon earth lodge at Ocmulgee National Monument, represents a significant rearrangement of the northern precinct. That the domicile may have been shifted to the north at this time is indicated by two segments of linear wall trenches discovered in the area directly north of the circular structures. These were located in a test trench and it was not possible to follow them out. These are possibly contemporaneous with the circular structures.

Shifting attention to the southern, or mortuary precinct, the stratigraphic sequence again reveals modification. The first identifiable construction following the dismantling of the mortuary and its adjacent building was the addition of a low blanket mantle designated Stage AI. This was the first mound building effort at Cemochechobee. It was a low, rectangular platform of yellow sand, designed apparently to completely cover the site of the old mortuary.

Although there was no building on the summit of the platform, there were four identifiable summit features and an isolated burial. Near the center of the summit was a well-defined hearth. Offset to one side was a large, deeply excavated pit intrusive from the summit which, however,

was apparently empty. Near the southern and western crests of the platform were two probable ritual deposits of pottery. One deposit consisted of a broken, double-spouted vessel accompanied by sherds of an incised bottle which showed an interior coat of red ochre. The other deposit consisted of an effigy adorno bowl with the adorno detached and missing. These ceramics were apparently placed as an offering just prior to the burial of the Stage AI mantle.

This "burial" was accomplished by the addition of a second, blanket mantle designated Stage AII. Unlike the earlier platform, the Stage AII mantle was constructed of mottled dark brown sand, supported around the margins by buttresses of red-orange clay.

There was no summit structure, and no burials are assignable to this stage. Nevertheless, there was evidence of ritual activity in the form of a central hearth and two ritual deposits of pottery placed just prior to the next mantle addition. One of these deposits consisted of 15 plain and incised ceramic beakers, in a compact cluster together with fragments of four large jars. The other consisted of an isolated, unique red filmed jar.

Overlying Stage AII was a third mantle, designated Stage AIII, which approximately doubled the height of Mound A. The fill of this mantle contrasted with that of the earlier zones, being variegated sand and clay collected from a number of source areas. Included within the fill were 17 burials, deposited without pits before and during the time that fill was being added.

These burials contrast with the earlier mortuary burials both in their lack of burial pits and in a general disregard for interment with respect to the cardinal directions, which had been strongly indicated

before. The two groups are comparable, however, in the kind and quantity of grave associations, and in the secondary nature of most of the interments. In both cases the remains seem to have been stored in a charnel facility for some time prior to burial, resulting in a loss of bones. Grave associations included such items as greenstone celts, marine shell beads, a busycon dipper, and various ceramic vessels including two negative painted effigy forms. Judging from the comparability of these grave associations with those of the earlier mortuary, it seems that the same superordinate population is represented in Stage AIII.

Meanwhile, replacing the last circular structure in the northern precinct, a separate small mound platform was built. This is designated Stage BI, constituting the beginning construction of Mound B. The platform featured a rectangular, ramp-like projection facing east. On its summit, to the rear of the platform, was a building designated Structure 6. It featured a well defined floor area, a central hearth, and scattered interior posts. Unlike the remainder of the buildings at Cemochechobee, however, no clear pattern of wall posts could be defined. Floor associations included abundant ceramic sherds, animal bone, mussel shell, a greenstone celt and a greenstone pin, collectively allowing an interpretation of the building as a domicile. Its presence on a mound platform and the occurrence of "special" ceramic wares among the associated summit remains indicate that, like earlier Structure 7, the building must have housed individuals of relatively high prestige in the community.

Associated with Stage BI on the basis of its alignment was a rectilinear pattern of post molds north of the platform. Most of this

pattern had been lost to erosion and its significance could not be determined. Within its limits was found an isolated child burial.

The next addition to Mound B consisted of a blanket mantle combined with a horizontal extension to the east. This stage is designated BII. On the summit was a small, simple structure with a central hearth and individually set wall posts. The wall pattern was a slightly asymmetrical rounded square, the configuration indicating a small dome-shaped hut. With the removal of the old Structure 6, which belonged to the preceeding stage, the area to the rear of the hut was covered over by a very irregular earth mantle consisting of piles of village debris, a large amount of ash, and burned daub from some village structure. The whole mound, following the removal of the small structure on the Stage BII summit, was next covered over with a thin but regular blanket mantle designated Stage BIII. This did not bear a summit structure or other summit features.

The next stage in Mound B, Stage BIV, consisted of yet another blanket mantle. It was thin, like the one preceeding it, but its content was a unique, gray ashy sand foreign to the other construction stages. It appeared as though this material was gathered from around a number of hearths, because the fill was liberally interspersed with burned wood flecks, ash, and carbonized botanical remains.

There was no summit structure, but instead there occurred, offset to one side, a truncated raised altar-like structure or dais. A small pocket of wood ash found atop this altar or dais indicated a small fireplace.

At the northern foot of the Stage BIV platform, a circular semi-subterranean structure was built. Structure 8 was 7.34m in diameter,

with a very regular series of wall posts indicating a domed roof. A central hearth consisted of a pile of wood ash. Few artifacts were found in association with the floor, suggesting that like the earlier circular structures, it did not serve as a domicile, but rather as a specialized building analogous to the historic Southeastern hot house. There were three sub-floor pits, two of which were shallow. The third was a relatively large, belled-out storage pit.

Following Stage BIV and the dismantling of the adjacent circular structure, another mantle, designated BV, was added to Mound B. This mantle featured a ramp with modeled steps, added to the eastern flank. The summit was slightly arched, and although it contained no definite evidence of a summit structure in the form of a well defined post mold pattern, there were nevertheless a number of hearth areas and scattered post molds indicating summit activity. It is possible that these features represent one or more temporary buildings.

The next Mound B addition was an architectural mantle designated Stage BVI. This very regular pyramidal mantle increased the dimensions of the mound both vertically and horizontally. Covering the old, east-facing ramp was a new ramp, this time without steps but lined with posts.

The summit of this mantle was occupied by a square wall trench structure, designated Structure 1 (XUB). The wall trenches were very shallow, almost vestigial in appearance. The floor area had been prepared by burning. Two central support posts and two smaller interior posts were identified. The structure displayed an auxiliary western or rear chamber, defined by an adjoining pattern of closely spaced post molds, in one place set in a shallow wall trench. This resembled, and probably corresponds to, the rear western chamber of the earlier Structure 7.

Sherds and chert flakes were scattered across the floor of Structure 1 (XUB), and quantities of charred botanical remains were recovered near the western wall. The structure is classified, like earlier Structures 6 and 7, as an elite domicile, analogous to the semi-public chief's houses recorded in Southeastern ethnohistorical literature. Structure 1 (XUB) was destroyed by burning, and the debris was apparently thrown in the narrow gap between Mound B and directly adjacent Mound A, which were beginning to converge as each mound received new mantle additions.

After the destruction of Structure 1 (XUB) on the Mound B summit, adjoining Mound A witnessed the addition of its final two mantles, designated Stages AIV and AV. As suggested earlier, this undoubtedly preplanned sequence of abandonment of the mound took the form of a symbolic burial consisting of two blanket mantles; the first a clay cap, followed by a second mantle of sand. In the central summit area of the AIV addition was a deposit of pottery, perhaps sacrificially placed as was clear for earlier deposits in the events just prior to new mantle addition. The sand coat, Stage AV, contained yet another pottery deposit, this one diffusely scattered instead of clustered. Again, ritual connotations are suggested. The deposit consisted of four whole or restorable ceramic vessels, along with seven other sherd clusters generally representing broken sections of jars. One of the vessels in this deposit was small and very crudely modeled from a lump of clay. It suggests that some vessels may have been made on an ad hoc basis for ritual purposes, perhaps by male priests rather than by female potters.

The next construction stage identifiable within the Nuclear Zone, BVII, consisted of a redesign of Mound B to accommodate three buildings. An architectural mantle was added to the existing mound, doubling it in size and summit area and greatly expanding it horizontally to the north. The east-facing ramp of the earlier mound was covered over with no effort to replace it. The summit area, prior to the construction of the three buildings, received a thin coat of yellow sand.

Taking the place of the elite domicile of Stage BVI was another building of the same class, a quadrilateral wall trench structure designated Structure 4. It had a large, irregular hearth area near the center of the floor. Associated artifacts included sherd clusters, scattered chert flakes, and two finely polished anvil stones.

The second of the two Stage BVII buildings, Structure 2, was also rectilinear, occupying the northwest corner of the summit. It featured single-post construction, a central hearth, and a crescent-shaped raised earth dais surmounted by a small fireplace. The dais perhaps reflects some special use for the structure.

The third building, Structure 3, was small and nearly circular, occupying the northeast summit area. It had a dished-out, saucer-shaped floor with two internal hearth areas and a sub-floor pit. It might be interpreted as a small hot house or isolation lodge.

Superimposed on the Stage BVII construction were three final blanket mantles, designated Stages BVIII, BIX, and BX. Each of these lacked summit structures. The final two mantles consisted respectively of a clay cap followed by a brown sand coat, the sequence mirroring that preceeding the abandonment of Mound A. It is possible that this sequence of blanket mantle addition, representing a final burial for the

symbolic Earth platform, was the norm for planned abandonment of platform mounds for this Mississippian society.

On the whole, this stratigraphic sequence has the appearance of a rather dry list of unrelated or poorly relatable configurations. Beyond the maintenance of the two functional precincts through time, there is virtually no perceivable change in any aspect or attribute of the Nuclear Zone which transcends the persistent, stage to stage shifts and reversals which characterize the sequence. There are, for example, no permanent shifts in architectural design over the 450 year period. Each structure is noticeably different in some major detail to all others. There is no consistency and there are no perceptible trends in sources of mound fill, which are different from stage to stage. There are no permanent trends in the relative location of structure types within the northern precinct. All of these add up to a picture of "anti-historical" change—periodic deliberate redesign of every facet of the ceremonial arena, following no broad patterns other than obvious disdain for and avoidance of all previous patterns.

This is perhaps too strongly put, but it is the crucial feature of the sequence. It seems unfamiliar because we are unaccustomed to finding any kind of change archaeologically which is not broad-based, either in response to some combination of causal factors or to stylistic drift. This is not evolutionary change, at least in a narrow sense of the term; the stage to stage modifications are not adaptive responses to external stimuli. Nor is the change accountable as mere style drift, or any process of diffusion. Instead, the pattern of Nuclear Zone change at Cemochechobee defies a tacit uniformitarian sense which dictates that change be detectably gradual, and always in response to

some identifiable process with a predictable outcome.

But neither is this change completely capricious. There are four identifiable elements which are repeated in the sequence, which constitute the framework within which the stage to stage renewals are made. These four elements are 1) the mortuary complex, comprising the charnel house and a series of blanket mantles in Mound A; 2) circular structures, of which there are five in the sequence representing perhaps council houses or "hot houses"; 3) elite domiciles, or quadrilateral "chief's house" type buildings, of which there are also five; and 4) ceremonial areas or compounds, which are found twice. It is possible that each of these four elements was present during each of the 19 stages defined, and that the limited expanse of the excavations within the Nuclear Zone is responsible for the missing elements in each stage.

This allows a redefinition of the type of change identified as being anti-historical. We may now say that it is a deliberate rearrangement and redesign of four elements of the ceremonial nucleus of the community, ritually motivated, and showing a periodicity equivalent to that seen in platform mound renewal. It involves a sort of taboo on all past configurations, including structural design, materials, orientation, and style.

It can be immediately seen that this pattern of modification is in harmony with the symbolism of ritual reburial encountered in platform mound ceremonialism. It must be seen in the same social context, as a manifestation of a rite of intensification strongly emphasizing the value of spiritual renewal for the community. The periodic changes in the ritual "stages" in which these values were communicated are an objective reflection of these symbolic ideas. Clearly, such change is not

inconsistent with an oscillating view of time, as mentioned earlier, in which time is personified by ritual actors moving back and forth along a relatively sacred to relatively profane axis.

If change in ceremonial configurations at a Mississippian site are an effort to distinguish the present from the past, and if this arises from the same deeply held core symbolism which underlies all Mississippian platform mound ceremonialism—that is, if it is part of the Mississippian ritual corpus—then we must hold in suspicion any efforts to detect "uniformitarian" change of any variety in the context of ritual structures at Mississippian sites. The differences to be expected from one configuration to the next in sequence ought to be similar to the kinds of ethnic markers which societies employ to distinguish themselves from their neighbors. This is the principle which accounts, in large measure, for the wide variation among ceremonial structure configurations of the Creek *talwas* or towns. Leach (1976:64) has described this phenomenon as follows.

> The question of whether a particular tribal community burn or bury their dead, or whether their houses are round or rectangular may sometimes have no functional explanation other than that the people concerned want to show themselves different from and superior to their neighbors down the road. In turn their neighbors, whose customs are just the opposite, feel equally confident that their way of doing things is correct and superior. The more similar the general cultural patterning of the two communities, the more critical will be the significance which is attached to such minor points of reversal.

Much inter-community variation among contemporaneous Mississippian societies is undoubtedly of this type. It is essential to recognize, however, that in the present case the phenomenon occurs not only on a synchronic place, but on a diachronic plane as well within particular communities, due to the value systems and ritual mechanisms in operation.

CHAPTER VI
SPACE AND MEANING

No symbolic structure can operate independently of its physical or phenomenal objectifications. It is by means of these objectifications, endowed with shared meanings, that a sense of social order can be created among humans, renegotiated, and transmitted. It certainly behooves the student of social and symbolic orders, then, to become familiar with the principles by which the physical structures of the created environment, and the meanings assigned to these structures are linked.

At the beginning of this study a dramaturgical metaphor was invoked in defining the characteristics of public ritual. It was said that public ritual is normally "staged", meaning that public ritual usually takes place in the context of an artificial *umwelt* or structured scene. The structuring of a given stage is not capricious or random; since it is designed to accommodate a particular corpus of ritual acts, there must be a direct relationship between the structure of the setting and the structure of ritual action. Considering ritual as a message-bearing set of events, clearly the meaningful structuring of space and the physical trappings and decor of the ritual arena are as much a part of the message of the ritual "text" as is the behavior of the dramatis personae.

If ritual stages can be seen to embody interpretable codes transposable to other dimensions of ritual, then this circumstance should be of special value to the archaeologist, whose ritual data are gleaned

largely from spatial information—forms and relationships among stages and props. One class of inferences can be made by comparing diachronic arrangements of these structures, as was attempted in the previous chapter. Another class of inferences can be made through an attempt to ascertain the meanings assigned to various synchronic elements of the ritual *umwelt*, or stage. This chapter, in order to expand upon statements already made about "ritual structures", and in preparation for the chapter to follow on mortuary features, will present some general thoughts on the possibilities for understanding the symbols and meanings attached to attributes of these spatial structures. This is a conceptually difficult task, and the present remarks should be construed only as a brief glimpse of some major issues which require much more theoretical attention.

The position is taken here that the artificially structured spaces employed in public ritual are so arranged not just as a matter of convenience or of pragmatic concerns, but rather in order to constitute in themselves symbolic representations meaningful to the ritual actors and observers. These objective structures can be said to be products of the structure of symbolic worlds, given material representation by a metaphorical process. As a symbolic representation, the ritual *umwelt* can be likened to a printed text, to be read by successive bodies of participants and observers (and finally by ourselves, distantly removed in time and space).

Miles Richardson (1980) has discussed the text-like feature of ritual material culture as it serves to convey meanings to successive sets of "readers" in ritual. Using the contrasting examples of the Spanish American iglesia and the Baptist church of the American South,

Richardson observes firstly that these stages fixate a nexus of core symbolism in time and in space, conveying in addition to these deeper meanings messages about the specific cultural present and its circumstances. In other words, the ritual stages carry the message that they are in and of a particular society at a particular time. We have already mentioned this kind of messaging in the context of ritual structures at the Cemochechobee site. This is the sense in which we can distinguish a nineteenth century novel from a twentieth century one, or a British novel from an American one, regardless of the intended meanings to be conveyed in the texts. A second text-like feature of ritual settings is that they are in an important respect alienated from the intentions and wishes of the authors, that is the planners and the builders. The intended meanings, through the abstraction of a concrete medium, are not always transmitted intact, because of the contribution of the ritual participant in reconstituting those meanings. Thus the meanings of the objective symbolism of a ritual stage are left relatively open, subject to various readings. Thirdly, the ritual stage is a medium for cultural transmission: the building up of symbolic repertoires among the participants in concert with the deeply embedded symbolic worlds of the authors or "old hands". Despite the abstraction and alienation of the objectified setting from the original symbolic nexus, it serves as the medium by which that nexus is reconstituted in the repertoires of newcomers. The *umwelt* is transformed again into a *welt*. The accretion of extraneous features and meanings in the process of objectification is a cognitive source of culture change.

To the participants in ritual, who are normally attending to the events rather than to the setting, it may not always be clear that the

setting or ritual facility itself is a symbolic representation. It may often seem to them that the features of the setting are matters of mere convenience, because of the tacit way in which these features are comprehended as symbols in the backgrounded knowledge of the participants, and because of the general nature of the symbols themselves. The meaning of these symbols remains for the most part submerged, and seems largely self-evident.

This generality of meaning is often required of the features of ritual stages, since the setting is often designed to accommodate not one but several different kinds of ritual. This is especially true of permanent facilities—take the example of a U.S. courtroom, which accommodates scenes of arraignments, hearings, jury trials, etc.—each of which requires a different ritual agenda and different dramatis personae.

The same familiar example of the courtroom demonstrates the symbolic nature of the use of space in the design of a ritual stage. The courtroom is first of all divided into three discrete zones, usually separated by actual walls restricting passage from zone to zone. These are the space occupied by the judge, the opposite space occupied by the gallery, and an intermediate space occupied by attorneys, the defendant, the jury, etc. Even by extinguishing all knowledge of the kinds of proceedings which occur there, the spaces and artifacts themselves betray the basic nature of the social divisions represented.

The three zones, for example, are clearly arranged on a polar axis. The seating facilities in the two polar zones plainly mark oppositions: the one versus the many; authority versus community. The zone of authority is hedged by a bastioned, fortress-like wall. There are two

further markers within the zone: ritual sacra (flags) and the use of the vertical axis to further bolster a social distinction—i.e. the judge's seat is elevated. Seating within the opposite zone, on the other hand, emphasizes homogeneity, community, and lack of social distinction.

The seating arrangements in both of the polar zones serve to focus attention on the intermediate zone, from which the inference could be correctly made that the intermediate zone is the site of the most significant ritual action. We could recognize it as a zone of liminality, in Van Gennep's terms, and indeed the characteristic feature of the ritual actors occupying this zone is that their status is in flux, betwixt and between normal social roles. The central liminal actor is the defendant. Court liasons, attorneys, and public defenders are institutionalized advocates and mediators. The jurors are between the major roles defined by the setting; they are selected as representatives of the community (one polar zone), but are temporarily invested with sacred power to acquit or indict, emanating from the opposite zone of authority.

Many American Christian churches possess the same polar, tripartate structure as the courtroom, emphasizing a similar sacred versus secular opposition in the positioning of sacred paraphernalia, in seating arrangements, etc. But whereas in the courtroom each of the three zones was literally walled in, in the Christian church these barriers are completely absent. There are different messages being conveyed in the two cases: the courtroom is designed to emphasize liminality rather than status transition, but the church must accommodate rites of passage—as in a wedding, where initiates are escorted by ritual elders progressively across the three zones and back again. These are inferences of

a type which do not require full ethnographic context, and are therefore available to the archaeologist.

It can also be perceived in these familiar examples the way in which the structure of the ritual setting can, in effect, be a representational microcosm of a larger social and natural world of distinctions—a simplified cosmology. As Rom Harré puts it, "the *Umwelt* structure may be an icon of a particular people's theory of their own society; that is, the physical structure of the *Umwelt* may function as a meaning-bearing entity, an icon of the content of certain propositions within the cosmology of a people" (1978:166). Harré observes that such an objective microcosm can express the macrocosm in two ways, either by exhibiting an isomorphism of structure, or by the conventional assignment of meanings to features. The compact, boiled-down, simplified nature of the objective microcosm, which puts cosmological propositions in everyday, material, orderly, tangible form, has as its primary message a kind of social reassurance of the correctness and inviolability of those positions (ibid:144). It is a conservative message.

Much of the published research demonstrating the microcosmological symbolism of architectural features and the social uses of space has focused upon domestic architecture rather than upon facilities for public ritual. As for other domains, domestic space tends to be organized as an expression of social distinctions and of notions concerning relationships between society and nature. Deetz (1977:92-117), for example, has shown how the development of Anglo-American house architecture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries precisely mirrors pervasive and deep-seated changes in world view, from a corporate and organic "medieval" pose to an ordered, mechanical, Renaissance-influenced

pose. As another example, Tambiah (1969) has described how house architecture in northeast Thailand reflects social distinctions of age, sex, and degree of intimacy, and furthermore provides a code for translating these social distinctions to similarly patterned sets of discriminations and classifications made within the natural world. Bourdieu (1971) has made a comparable analysis of the microcosmological significance of the features of Berber use of domestic space.

Closer to the topic of Mississippian society and symbolism, we may examine the conceptual plan of an eighteenth century Seminole house as described and illustrated by William Bartram (1909:37-38). The house belonged to a Seminole chief who was known to the traders as "the Bosten or Boatswain" (Figure 7).

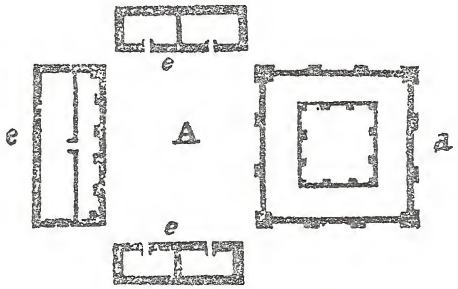


FIGURE 7. PLAN OF AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SEMINOLE HOUSE.

> It was composed of three oblong uniform frame buildings [e], and a fourth, foure-square [a], fronting the principal house or common hall, after this manner, encompassing one area [A]. The hall was his lodginghouse, large and commodious; the two wings were, one a cook-house, the other a skin or ware-house; and the large square one was a vast open *pavilion*, supporting a canopy of cedar roof by two rows of columns or pillars, one within the other. Between each range of pillars was a platform, or what the traders call cabins [Fr. *cabane*=cot or berth], a sort of sofa raised about two feet above the common ground, and ascended by two steps; this was covered with checkered mats of curious manufacture, woven of splints of canes dyed of different colors; the middle was a four-square stage or platform, raised nine inches or a foot higher than the cabins or sofas, and also covered with mats.

The rectangular "principal house" opposite the large square structure is identifiable as the usual "winter house" found among the Creeks. Here it is a single room structure; the column-lined compartment facing the central plaza represents an open porch or ramada. One of the lateral wings is described as a "cook-house", which would have incorporated the corn crib, and the opposite one is a "skin or ware-house" (We are not told which of these is which, but that is irrelevant to the analysis). The two wings are identical structures, divided transversely into two rooms. Finally, the "vast open *pavilion*", the large square open structure, is an especially elaborate version of the common "summer house" found among the Creeks.

From Bartram's description one may reconstruct the conceptual plan of Bosten's house. It is, first of all, clearly organized along two perpendicular axes, and the poles of these axes are assigned contrasting values. Furthermore both of these sets of discriminations are ways of classifying the natural world, that is, of imposing social order upon it, so that cultural activities regarding nature may be systematized and regulated. The first axis represents an arbitrary division of the solar cycle into winter versus summer. The second axis similarly discriminates

between types of food: animal products of hunting versus vegetable products of gathering and horticulture. The latter opposition further connotes a sexual division of labor. Hunting was exclusively a male activity, while horticulture and plant food gathering was nearly always women's work. It is not surprising that these two sets of oppositions, between winter and summer and between the sexes, should be among the prevailing ones in Southeastern Indian societies (Hudson 1976:259). The plaza defined by the floor structures is plainly "liminal space". It would not be far from the mark to characterize the whole house-complex as a microcosm or condensed classificatory model describing certain relations between society and the natural world.

Since the two conceptual axes logically intersect, it is possible to define four quadrants of social activity by combining the polar terms of the perpendicular axes in pairs, as shown in Figure 8 below. These allow predictions of the particular uses of the unidentified compartments in the two wings of Bosten's house.

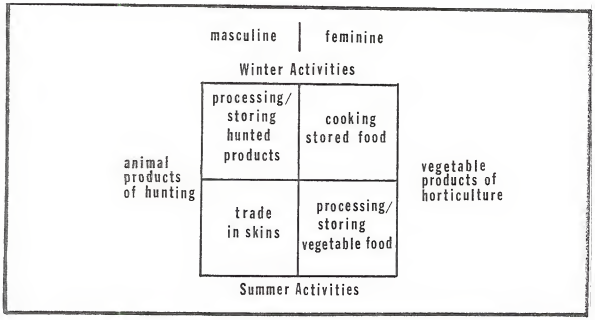


FIGURE 8. CONCEPTUAL PLAN OF THE BOSTEN HOUSE.

It is important to remark here that neither the form nor the conceptual plan of the Seminole house just described can be taken as a standard for Southeastern or even eighteenth century Seminole practice, because, like the variability among Creek *talwas* in ceremonial arrangements, house patterns were quite mutable even within particular towns. Only three adequate descriptions of comparable houses of the period have survived, and each of the three is different. Although information is scarce, it seems probable that much of this variability was of the discriminatory type discussed earlier. That is, specific house patterns were probably used to mark the clan membership or generational status of particular households among the Creeks and Seminoles. The distinction of this mode of variability from codes reflecting core symbolism has been established earlier.

Had more detailed descriptions of eighteenth century Creek and Seminole houses survived, it would surely become possible to map out the various symbolic transformations according to which house forms and uses varied in time and space. Bartram's (1909:56) descriptions of a generalized "Upper Creek" house and of a Cuscowilla (Oconee Seminole) house (Harper 1958:122) are suggestive, but these data are inadequate to pursue a comparative project in search of replicating correspondences. The Cuscowilla house, unlike the square ground-like house of Bosten, was T-shaped in plan, consisting of two separate buildings rather than four. Nevertheless, the Cuscowilla house can be viewed as a fairly simple conceptual transformation of the former. In it, the masculine-feminine axis is almost completely collapsed, surviving only in a bipartate transverse division of the winter house into a "cook-room" versus a "lodging room". The summer-winter axis remains intact, with a granary

and "potato house" (and also probably a skin warehouse) added to the summer house. That is, the elements which in the Bosten house defined the masculine-feminine axis are here transferred appropriately along the summer-winter axis and conjoined with other elements. In addition, a third dimension is added for the Cuscowilla house. This is a vertical axis probably representing a culture/nature type opposition, by which horticultural products were segregated from wild gathered plant products.

Here, then, are some possibilities for the archaeologist to consider in analyzing Mississippian architecture, both domestic and public. But an obvious feature of all of these examples is that the assignment of meanings to objective features can be checked in their full ethnographic context. The archaeological case is different. In it the conventional meanings may be irretrievable, leaving only recourse to quasi-universal principles for inferring general sets of meanings and oppositions.

Fortunately for the student of Mississippian ritual phenomena, such conventional meanings and symbols are not totally obscured by time and can be to some degree salvaged from ethnohistorical and historical data. A primary aim of this study has been to make a convincing case for the interpretability of many Mississippian ritual features in light of particular conventions. For these "texts" it is possible to decipher a grammar, and the rudiments of a lexicon.

The problem of conventional meaning remains, however, the most ponderous and significant issue in the interpretation of archaeological ritual. It appears that, without introductory clues found in the historical record and in myth, the archaeologist lacks the initial anchorage necessary to make sense out of a sea of arbitrary images. In

particular regard to the symbolic use of space, Mary Douglas (1972:521) has spoken of this as "an insoluble problem".

Nevertheless, a number of scholars have been interested in the possibility of quasi-universal principles in the symbolic ordering of space which transcend specific ethnographic contexts. If such principles can be shown to have general validity, they could be of some utility for inferring meanings at a basic level regardless of the archaeological obscurity of the interpreted phenomena.

As a simple example, one might observe that walls, a class of artificial boundaries commonly encountered in archaeological remains, are normally infused with important symbolic significance. They are in effect objective taboos, channeling by their design human energies and marking socially significant spaces. In contrast to the numerous "invisible" social boundaries which are learned and maintained by individuals in interaction, walls are exaggerated, intentionally insurmountable and opaque social boundaries, conveying the message of differential symbolic values associated with either side.

As another rather obvious illustration, it is usually possible to segregate facilities which are communal from those which are idiomatic. Often these are set in definite polar opposition. In cases of ritual stages, the idiomatic facilities may be associated with sacred paraphernalia (as in the courtroom example), allowing the interpretation of the polarity as some version of the sacred/profane dichotomy. Edmund Leach (1976:85) has formalized this proposition into what might loosely be called a general theory of the public ritual *umwelt*.

> Every religious ritual, no matter whether it takes place at a wayside shrine temporarily erected for the purpose or in a permanent setting such as the sanctuary of a cathedral, is performed within the confines of a stage, the boundaries and segments of which are artificial. At a structural level the components of such stages are highly standardized. There are three essential elements:
>
> Zone 1. The shrine proper, which, in the context of the ritual, becomes extremely sacred. It usually contains some iconic symbol which makes it immediately apparent that this is where the deity is, e. g. an image, an empty seat, a crucifix.... In the context of the ritual this "shrine proper" is treated as if it were actually a part of the Other World.
>
> Zone 2. The place of assembly of the congregation. The essential point here is that this area must be close to but separated from the shrine proper. In the context of the ritual, ordinary members of the congregation must not enter the shrine proper which is reserved for priests and other religious functionaries.
>
> Zone 3. An area of middle ground on which most of the action of the ritual takes place which is likewise reserved for the priests.

Not all societies, of course, that have public ritual facilities also have priesthoods, but as a general model for polar structures of this type Leach's description has wide applicability. A similar polar structure has already been examined in this study: the premound features at the Cemochechobee site. In that instance the dichotomy was between a bounded, communal space and a relatively sacred bounded space reserved for mortuary ritual. These were separated by a liminal zone containing a sacred symbol, the perpetual fire. Polar structures of this sort can also be recognized at the level of community plan. As an illustration, Figure 9 reproduces Cyrus Thomas' plan of a Mississippian village in Stoddard County, Missouri. Here, as in many other cases, the cultural world is structured and set off from the natural world by conspicuous artificial boundaries—twin embankments. On the western side of the diagram are the house depressions which define

the community proper. While there is a size range among them, in general they are a homogeneous and apparently randomly mixed group. To the east of this communal zone is a featureless band, and to the east of the featureless band are the sacred features of the site — two platform mounds. The mounds are of a different form, one rectangular and the other circular, arranged along a north-south axis with the usual featureless zone in-between. The arrangement of the mounds thus suggests a further, sacred dichotomy linked to the socioreligious contexts within which each mound functioned.

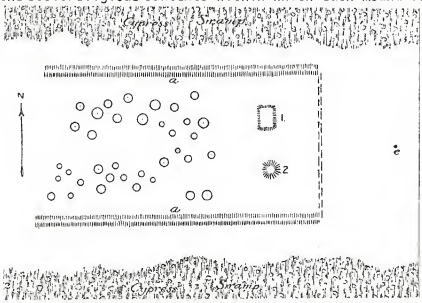
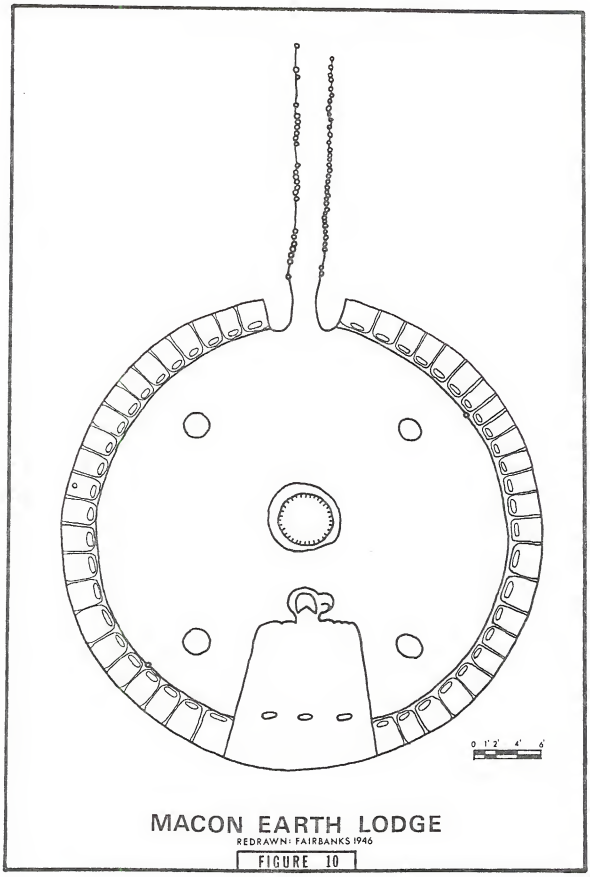


FIGURE 9. THOMAS' PLAN OF THE "LAKEVILLE SETTLEMENT," MISSOURI.

Polar structures of this type need not be arrayed along a single axis, but can otherwise be concentric, with the sacred facility or symbol in the center, surrounded by a liminal zone, followed by a communal ring equidistant from the center. The Mississippian earth lodge at Ocmulgee National Monument, described by Fairbanks (1946), displays such a concentric polar structure. It is a circular structure, the center of which is dominated by a sacred symbol, the fire pit. Surrounding the fire is a featureless zone (except for support posts). Along the inner wall of the structure, equidistant from the fire are 50 modeled clay seats, emphasizing homogeneity and lack of differentiation. Thus Leach's formula is reproduced concentrically or axially.



MACON EARTH LODGE

REDRAWN: FAIRBANKS 1946

FIGURE 10

But in this example there is yet another polar axis superimposed on the concentric one. This axis is defined by the entranceway on one side of the earth lodge, and opposite this entranceway, another sacred symbol: a modeled clay bird-platform. Three of the clay seats in the outer ring surmount this bird platform, and are thus distinguished by association with the sacred.

This superimposition of axes, each carrying a different message about the seated participants (homogeneity in the one case; status differentiation in the other), nicely illustrates a further point: ritual stages can only project a very limited number of symbolic discriminations and still remain orderly, uncluttered, and coherent. But the social bodies which normally make use of such ritual facilities are, in direct contrast, usually organized by a highly complex and multifaceted web of statuses and roles, which are symbolically represented in various ways. Thus, as Lévi-Strauss (1963) has observed for diametric structures, the structure of a ritual setting, in its simplistic cogency, can be more an obfuscation than a reliable portrait or reflection of social distinctions.

Such quasi-universal patterns of representation as diametry, linear polarity, concentric polarity and tripartate division, while they are interesting commentaries on the innately human search for order in the construction of social reality, nevertheless cannot promise great discoveries an analytical tools. For Mississippian studies, these principles must be conjoined with the search for conventional meanings in concrete symbols, which alone can further progress in penetrating the richness of Mississippian world view.

CHAPTER VII
IN AND OUT OF THE CHARNEL-HOUSE

Up to this point the subject matter has been primarily rites of intensification. Now it is time to focus our attention on the other major class of ritual, the rites of passage. By definition, rites of passage occur on the average at a smaller scale than do rites of intensification, but this does not necessarily mean that public facilities for rites of passage must always be less conspicuous, or archaeologically less visible, than those designed primarily to accommodate community calendrical rites. Indeed, as Bloch (1971) has shown for the Merina of Madagascar, sometimes a single set of customs concerning a rite of passage, in that case funeral ritual, can come to dominate the religious life to the point of becoming a central reference point for organizing social relations within a society. Mortuary facilities are correspondingly the most elaborate and expensive possession of the average Merina.

On the other hand, it is quite true that stages accommodating lesser rites of passage can be very simple or even ad hoc affairs, and that these should normally escape archaeological detection. Even relatively important transition rites may take place in no more than a cleared area, which although spatially structured in accord with definite principles, have no permanent or imperishable features, the material paraphernalia or sacra being imported to the site and removed again following the ceremony to a place of storage. In such cases the passage of a few years may effectively obliterate all evidence of the structuring of the stage, or at least obscure what evidence remains.

Furthermore, common rites of passage such as marriage, puberty initiations, and births, leave little or no conspicuous material residue. It is consequently impossible in most cases to address these customary behaviors archaeologically. But funerals leave bones and grave features, and so we must focus our labors on mortuary ritual.

The analysis of Mississippian mortuary patterning by a growing number of investigators has proven exceptionally fruitful, especially as applied to the problem of social organization and its evolution. Instead of reviewing this literature, however, or attempting to build upon these traditions of inquiry which have served other investigators well (e.g. Saxe 1970, Binford 1971, Brown 1971, Peebles 1974, Goldstein 1976), attention will be diverted here to a rather different perspective on the same body of data. Specifically, two topics will be addressed: 1) What is the meaning surrounding Mississippian secondary and tertiary burial? We will want to examine the symbolism connected with charnel facilities and with corporate group burial, with an eye open to archaeological correlates. 2) What is the logical process by means of which funeral rites can become intermeshed with broad-scale rites of intensification? Or more precisely, what is the role of human burial within the context of platform mound ceremonialism as discussed earlier? We will call this process "embedding".

In an earlier chapter rites of passage were defined as they are contrasted to rites of intensification, but it is appropriate at this point to review briefly the concept as Van Gennep (1960) perceived it. In the Western society with which we are most familiar, social life tends to be conceived as a continuous or relatively uninterrupted process from birth to death. But this is in marked contrast to simpler

societies which tend to see social life as a series of qualitatively different, bounded states, which are sequentially occupied by the individual. Rites of passage mark the nodes separating one state from the next; that is, they draw attention to the complete and fairly sudden redefinition of the social person as he/she passes into a new status with new roles. These gross distinctions between sequent states mean not only that the individual must completely readjust, but that the society as a whole must readjust its various relationships as well, as its continuity of social actors is recurrently broken. That is why, to the degree that the initiate is influential in community affairs, rites of passage are public, sometimes costly, emotional events of great importance, often evocative of core symbolism.

Van Gennep noticed that the nature of these status transitions dictated that their structure be tripartate, consisting of:
1) Rites of separation, by means of which the initiate throws off old statuses and roles in preparation for the new. Frequently the initiate is physically separated and isolated from normally structured society.
2) Rites of transition (liminality), an intermediate period of adjustment. Victor Turner (1969) has greatly expanded this concept, pointing out that it is symbolically a time of "anti-structure" during which role reversal is not uncommon. It is an optimum time for the "reeducation" of the initiate concerning core values (sometimes employing material sacra, or sacred symbols). The kind of transcendant feeling of social unity or oneness which emerges in liminality once normal social structure is ritually stripped away is called "communitas". Van Gennep observed that, among other rites of passage, funerals with their amplified attention to readjustment most strongly emphasize liminal rites.

3) Rites of incorporation, by means of which the initiate is introduced to the new status/role structure, and normal activity is resumed.

For Fortes (1962:86), rites of passage are symbolic ways of binding together the individual with a socially defined status, which are regarded as separate. "Ritual presents office to the individual as the creation and possession of society or a part of society into which he is to be incorporated through the office." In a fundamental sense, then, rites of passage are public methods of conferring upon an individual the proscriptions, rights, and privileges associated with a given ascribed or achieved status, and of removing those of the prior condition. These formulations apply as well to funerals as to initiatory rites.

Mississippian mortuary practices, considered as a unit, are a highly variable conglomeration in contrast to earlier Woodland practices, which are relatively more uniform. Thorne Deuel's early definition of "Mississippi Basic Culture", however, referred to specific burial traits as characterizing the cultural complex. "Interment", Deuel alleged, "was made in cemeteries, although important individuals were buried in the top of temple (and domiciliary) mounds even in historic times" (1935:433). Deuel's concept of Mississippian in 1935 largely took the Dickson Mound site near Lewiston, Illinois as its prototype. (Dickson had a Spoon River phase component which had yielded a large Mississippian cemetery). Some later investigators have likewise considered cemetery burial and extended primary deposition of corpses as marker traits for Mississippian cultures, but within the Mississippian construct as it has been expanded over the years and as it is being used here, it is inaccurate to speak of this as a defining mode.

The variability in Mississippian mortuary treatments is evident at several levels: among separate Mississippian cultures and periods, among sites, and within sites where many different treatments may appear contemporaneously within the same community. Primary interments are commonly extended, but may be flexed or semiflexed with variations such as sitting burials occasionally occurring. In a number of Mississippian cultures and social segments the axis of orientation of the corpse is a consistent feature, and may be solstitial or equinoctial. Items deposited with the dead range from none to elaborate ritual paraphernalia in the graves of high-ranking individuals at ceremonial centers. Grave goods have been successfully used as indicators of social ranking within Mississippian communities, and evidence of artifactual symbols of office within rank hierarchies has been reported. Similarly, burial features range in elaboration from simple earth coverings without pits, through stone-lined graves, to deep log-covered tombs, with numerous other possibilities. Burials may be grouped within discrete cemeteries, in which spatial and artifactual differentiations related to social rank may be discerned. Alternatively, burials may be deposited beneath the floor of a mortuary structure or charnel-house. Such mortuaries can normally be considered facilities used by a discrete corporate group of lineal descent (see Saxe 1970:119), e.g. the bone-houses used by separate Choctaw clans. In cases where Mississippian ceremonial centers yield one such central or especially elaborate mortuary facility, it is reasonable to suppose that it is the product of a superordinate kin group. The same may be said of limited populations of burials placed within and around platform mounds reserved for this purpose, as were maintained among such Mississippian cultures as Cairo Lowland, Tennessee-Cumberland,

Bessemer, Wilbanks, Rood, Macon Plateau, and Fort Walton.

Evidence of secondary and tertiary burial of defleshed bones after temporary deposition of the corpse in a separate facility is also very common among Mississippian cultures, and these practices will be explored in some detail below. The percentage of secondary burials varies widely among sites; from special corporate burial situations such as occur at the Cemochechobee site (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979) where approximately 90% of the recovered burials are secondary or tertiary interments, to sites like Moundville, where only 40% are secondary or tertiary (proportionately more within the mounds) (Peebles 1974:293). Mississippian corpses were interred in various states of decomposition. They might be partially articulated, with only an extremity or two out of place. They might otherwise consist of an isolated skull or mandible, or a bundle of disarticulated bones. Sometimes formerly disarticulated bones had been rearticulated in the grave. In many cases large portions of the skeleton are missing. Cremations, considered here as a subset of secondary burial, are uniformly rare. Secondary and tertiary interments may contain grave goods of the same order as primary interments, although the presence/absence of such furnishings may be significantly correlated with mode of burial.

The bulk of the evidence for secondary and tertiary burial among Mississippian cultures comes from observations of the lack of body parts and of skeletal articulation within burials. Evidence of facilities for the initial burial are difficult to identify. At some sites reexcavated burial pits testify to the exhumation and reburial of the corpse. This, however, is rather uncommon. Other possible modes for initial burial, for example scaffolding as practised by many historic

Southeastern groups, have not been identified archaeologically at Mississippian sites (because they generally leave no diagnostic evidence); but based solely upon the frequency of secondary and tertiary burial vis-à-vis identifiable first-burial facilities, such practices as temporary scaffold burial must have been very common. Actual bounded facilities, e.g. houses or compounds, for the initial collective placement of the dead should not be a common feature, for reasons which will become clear later.

Secondary burial was equally common among the historic descendants of Mississippian societies. A minimum list of Southeastern Indian groups practicing secondary burial of corpses reduced to skeletal remains in the postcontact period would include the Powhatan, the Algonkian groups of Virginia and Carolina, the Tuscarora and Santee, the Potomac, the Tocobaga and Tequesta, the Choctaw, the Natchez, and the Chitimacha.

An anthropological approach to the subject of secondary burial must begin with Robert Hertz's brilliant essay on the subject, "Contribution à une Étude sur la Représentation Collective de la Mort" (A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death) (Hertz 1907) published in Année Sociologique. It is a cross-cultural study of the symbolism connected with secondary burial practices, but it deals most extensively with the Dayak of Borneo, particularly the Olo Ngaju. Hertz was a student of Durkheim, and like Durkheim he used a method which explored the subject as it applied to a particular people and region in exhaustive detail, calling in data from societies farther afield only to ascertain whether the principles derived could be further generalized. In Hertz's case the results have been applied by

modern fieldworkers (Huntington and Metcalf 1979) with good success, and these fieldworkers have testified to their exploratory power.

Hertz begins with the idea that secondary burial, and the necessary lengthening of the funeral rites that it implies, are linked to the belief that death is not an instantaneous termination of biological functions, as we tend to see it, but something more profound. He observes that death "does not confine itself to ending the visible bodily life of an individual; it also destroys the social being grafted upon the physical individual and to whom the collective consciousness attributed great dignity and importance" (Hertz 1960:77). Death is therefore not just a natural phenomenon among societies bearing such practices, but a sinister force which threatens the existence of society itself; it is not sudden, but is gradual and structured like all other life-passages.

> Every change of status in the individual, as he passes from one group to another, implies a deep change in society's mental attitude toward him, a change that is made gradually and requires time. The brute fact of physical death is not enough to consummate death in people's minds: the image of the recently deceased is still part of the system of things of this world, and looses itself from them only gradually by a series of internal partings. We cannot bring ourselves to consider the deceased as dead right away: he is too much a part of our substance, we have put too much of ourselves into him, and participation in the same social life creates ties which are not to be severed in one day (1960:81-82).

For the Dayak as for other societies, Hertz makes it clear that mortuary customs including secondary burial are structured like any other major rite of passage. Among the Dayak the first, temporary burial on

an isolated scaffold, and the observances surrounding it, were rites of separation. The subsequent period of mourning during which the body decomposed in its temporary grave was characteristically liminal. During this time the soul was destined to be a homeless wanderer on earth, and the mourning kin were ritually segregated from the remainder of the community by taboo. At the final ceremony and feast the cleaned bones were rearticulated and transferred in new wrappings to the charnel house, the soul was ceremonially and finally directed to the community of the dead, and the prohibitions concerning the mourners were lifted. This event was clearly a rite of incorporation to a normal, structural state.

The mortuary rites of passage were not simply directed toward the corpse, but toward three distinct categories of actors: 1) the corpse, transformed from a corruptible body to an incorruptible and irreducible skeleton; 2) the soul, generally separate from the body after death, transformed from the community of the living to the community of the dead; and 3) the mourners, who undergo a transformation in mental state. These three kinds of transformations were among the Dayak structured and concurrently achieved through ritual. Furthermore, and central to Hertz's analysis, is the recognition that specific portions of the funeral observances are not directed toward expediting the passage of one category to actor versus the other two, but rather toward emphasizing analogies between the respective passages of the different sets taken in pairs (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:62).

Thus, the decomposition of the body and the separation of corruptible flesh from incorruptible bones is taken as a natural metaphor both for the processes of gradually changing the soul to its new condition among

the ancestors, and of gradually adjusting the status of the mourners. When the decomposition is finished (and this of course can be manipulated to hurry it up or slow it down), the other two processes are completed as well. While the body is decomposing and is consequently between states, the soul undergoes a kind of earthly probation "during which it stays on earth in the proximity of the body, wandering in the forest or frequenting the places it inhabited while it was alive" (Hertz 1960:34). It is isolated from communion with either world, it is dangerous, and it must be placated. At the same time the mourning kin are similarly isolated from society. They are subject to numerous prohibitions, and must flag themselves by special dress and bodily decoration announcing their state of pollution. They are also subject to spiritual attack by the hostile soul, since they alone are in contact with the body and are responsible for guarding it. These isolations, prohibitions, and taboos, all of which segregate the actors from their respective normal communities, clarify why the place of temporary burial is almost invariably isolated, segregated from other burials. In direct contrast, the bones during the final ceremonies of incorporation are brought to a charnel-house, which is a communal facility, symbolizing the aggregation of the community of the dead.

In a similar way, an analogy is made between the fate of the soul and the fate of the mourners, emphasizing the idea that the community of the dead is socially structured as a mirror of the community of the living. Accordingly during the funeral ceremonies, the progress of the soul in overcoming the obstacles in its path toward the world of spirits is acted out in the human world. And the world of ancestral spirits finds

its objective analog in the charnel-house, which is commonly furnished with material symbols and valuables of a quality befitting some revered ancestors.

Hertz emphasizes that the final rites of incorporation surrounding the placement of bones in the charnel-house effectively neutralizes the obligations of the living, especially of the mourners, to the dead. But he adds that "the bones are still endowed with a character such that a too close contact with them seems dreadful and it is often preferred to put a fair distance between the house of the dead and the living (ibid:56). The bones are still a source of potentially malicious power, and further ritual acts may be necessary to deal with this condition, especially as the ancestors accumulate in number. Actually, cross-cultural comparison shows that attitudes are variable toward "incorporated" skeletal remains. Bones may be considered generally beneficial to the living, hence they might be returned to the houses of relatives; this may be institutionalized as an "ancestor cult". Or the bones may be considered so residually polluting and dangerous that they require tertiary burial, or calendrical rites designed to periodically remove the pollution accumulated in the maintenance of charnel facilities. Tertiary burial seems to have been an option chosen in some Mississippian societies, as it was for example among the historic Choctaw and Natchez. We will explore Choctaw tertiary burial in more detail, as a potential model for Mississippian practice.

Parenthetically, Hertz points out in his essay that the cause of death in particular cases, if it is exceptional—e.g. by suicide, murder, or accident—can result in exceptions to the normal ritual procedures. "Their bodies inspire the most intense horror and are got rid of

precipitately; furthermore, their bones are not laid with those of the other deceased members of the group who have died a normal death. Their unquiet and spiteful souls roam the earth forever (ibid:85). Recalling the Premound Precinct Complex features at the Cemochechobee site discussed earlier (Figure 6), this account accords well with the circumstances surrounding central Burial 1 (XUA). This isolated corpse, in contrast to those who gained burial within the adjacent mortuary, was fully articulated and had thus been buried before decomposition was complete. Furthermore the feet had been severed; they were missing from the tomb. Appropriately for the fate of the soul, if we may credit this interpretation, this corpse was interred in the zone we have identified as liminal space, between the objective ritual representations of the community of the dead (the mortuary) and the community of the living (the Northern Ceremonial Compound) (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979).

Now, in adopting a Hertzian analytical frame, it is clear that we must distinguish archaeologically among facilities and features designed 1) for initial burial, 2) for secondary burial, and 3) for tertiary burial. It has already been said that the first kind of facilities will not generally be easy to recognize, because they may consist of simple scaffolds, which leave mainly post molds; because they are usually isolated; and because they are features associated only with a small group of mourners, the close kin, and will be correspondingly simple and transitory in comparison with the communal secondary repositories which involve larger social units such as conical clans. Evidence of exhumed burials, where encountered, can be considered conceptually parallel to scaffold burial and other possible modes of initial burial.

Potentially, more than one mode can exist within the same community synchronically, marking social distinctions (see Hertz 1960:30). Public facilities designed for collective initial disposal of corpses contain an element of incongruity, since these must find other than spatial means of symbolizing separation. These consequently should be rare among Mississippian groups practicing secondary burial, as they are worldwide. As a counter-example, just such a facility occurs at the pre-Mississippian (Weeden Island Period) McKeithen site in north-central Florida (Milanich and Fairbanks 1980:135-136). But within that facility, as within other conceivable ones, separation could have been maintained by processing only one corpse at a time. If we are allowed to rationalize it that way, then one can say that such structures are not communal after all, and differ from other facilities for initial burial only in their size and permanence, being used again and again as required.

Facilities designed for secondary disposal of cleaned bones are commonly called charnel-houses or ossuaries. It should be made clear however, that the term ossuary implies secondary burial specifically, while the term charnel-house does not; modifiers may be used accordingly to clarify the usage. The form of Mississippian structures which have been interpreted as charnel-houses is quite variable, and it is important to note that usually they can be identified only by association with subsurface burials, which may not be secondary but rather primary or tertiary interments. This of course is a complicating circumstance, since charnel-houses may, and probably most often do, store skeletal remains above-ground. The use of the vertical axis as an additional spatial marker, for example in segregating subsurface burials

beneath the floor of a charnel-house from those stored directly above them, is a special case denoting some particular opposition, e.g. between the states symbolized by primary and secondary burial, between secondary and tertiary burial, or some other distinction. It follows as a matter of method that one must always be careful to identify to the extent possible the exact sequential procedure followed in ritually processing the remains, although this tends to be frustrated in practice by the awful truism that burials prior to the terminal one generally do not contain any bones. To help in clarifying this notion of vertical oppositions, we may use the well known example of the charnel-house/temple of the historic Natchez which was described by the French in the early part of the eighteenth century. The archaeological remains of this and somewhat earlier versions of the described structure were excavated first by Chambers and later by Neitzel in Mound C at the Fatherland site in Mississippi, the former Grand Village of the Natchez. Beneath the floor of the charnel-house/temple, Chambers and Neitzel found 1) extended primary burials, 2) disarticulated skeletal elements in decayed wooden boxes, 3) isolated skull burials, and 4) numerous large empty pits (Neitzel 1965:41, 82-83). Correlation of these features with documented burials of Natchez nobility, primarily from the accounts of Du Pratz and Dumont describing the funeral in 1725 of Tattooed Serpent, a war chief (Swanton 1911:144-157; Neitzel 1965:78-85), allow us to state that the vertical axis was used to mark two oppositions. It was first used to distinguish initial interment from secondary disposal: Tattooed Serpent and his retainers were buried in the flesh below the temple floor, later to be exhumed, the bones being placed in above-ground hampers. The presence, then, of boxed bones and disarticulated remains

found archaeologically beneath the floor indicates another, tertiary interment episode not described in the documents, this time the vertical axis being used to express the secondary-tertiary distinction. In this instance, then, above-ground burial is always secondary, while sub-floor burial may be either primary or tertiary, the important symbolic distinctions being made vertically among successive phases in the burial program.

We are now in a position to comment on a common and conspicuous feature of Mississippian secondary/tertiary burial, which is a general pre-interment neglect of both bones and associated artifacts. Skeletal elements are frequently missing at random, can be found in the "wrong" grave, and grave goods sometimes exhibit evidence of pre-interment neglect or maltreatment. In accounting for this it should be remembered that it is generally only the close kin who have access to the corpse during the liminal or transitional period; others stay away for fear of becoming polluted. It is also during this period that gifts are typically offered to the deceased to placate the soul. Contact in general is very restricted, and if the initial disposal is remote and above-ground, the corpse may be subject to the ravages of rats, vultures, and dogs as well as more passive agents of decomposition. Further, neglect of the corpse may be due to conscious motives arising from ambivalent feelings of the mourners toward placation; they may wish to impress upon the soul of the deceased its obligation to society for allowing it, through ritual, to be transformed. Turner (1969:103) says that it is characteristic of liminal neophytes in general to "have to be shown that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is impressed upon them by society". Liminal states typically deemphasize distinctions of age, sex,

rank, and the possession of property or wealth (ibid:106-107)—these distinctions are restored in the collective charnel-house. This factor may conceivably influence what is commonly held as axiomatic: that status in death as reflected in grave accompaniments is a direct indicator of terminal status in life.

To this point the discussion of the phenomenon of tertiary burial has been left somewhat neglected, principally because our initial cues were taken from Hertz. Hertz ended his analysis of mortuary ritual with secondary burial and a "final ceremony" designed to restore order among the mourners, the corpse, and the soul. To deal with the idea of tertiary or multiple interments beyond the funeral rites of passage per se, we need the additional concept of "embedding".

Given the three-phase diachronic formula for rites of passage and rites of intensification outlined by Van Gennep, there is a sentence in his text which at first glance seems a puzzling and unnecessary confusion of this simple scheme. It speaks of "rites of separation from the usual environment; rites of incorporation into the sacred environment; a transitional period; rites of separation from the local sacred environment; rites of incorporation into the usual environment" (Van Gennep 1960:82). Here we seem to have a five-phase formula rather than the usual three. Fortes has commented upon this apparent contradiction, and it exemplifies for him the way that the three terms can constitute a "Procrustean Formula" (1962:55). That is, Fortes fears that the terms can be applied to field data almost any way one wishes, which is tantamount to saying that all the formula accomplishes is a demonstration that every ritual sequence has a beginning, a middle, and an end. But

this judgment is too hasty; field research by Collins (1969) on the Peyote Ceremony at Taos Pueblo has shown that there are examples of public ritual practices which really do have compound structures like the one that Van Gennep described, and in no ambiguous or equivocal way. Collins essentially showed that the three-phase structure of separation-transition-incorporation can be embedded within one or more of the terms in a larger structure of the same type.

The term "embedding" may be formalized to describe the process by which the symbolic structures of ritual may be compounded. This redundancy can be inserted at any one of the three stages or in all of them, in order to impress their special significance to the initiates or to emphasize particular passages where numerous classes of actors are involved. For separation rites, this may take the form of a rehearsal. For rites of incorporation, it may ease the transition directly from a highly sacred to a profane state, where this is seen as especially difficult. Finally, remembering that rites of passage and rites of intensification have a common underlying structure, one can show that one form may logically be embedded within the other.

As applied to the problem of Mississippian tertiary burial, one must first observe that funeral rites culminating in a "final ceremony", while these assure the successful passage of the corpse, soul, and mourners, do not terminate the relationship between the living and the dead. On the contrary they initiate a new sacralized state of relationship, since a new and powerful ancestral entity, closely associated with the remaining bones, has been created and must now be dealt with. The new responsibilities are exemplified by what Lawson reports of the historic Algonkians of the Carolinas.

> If they remove never so far, to live in a foreign country, they never fail to take all these dead bones along with them, though the tediousness of their short daily marches keeps them never so long on their journey. They reverence and adore this quiogozon [charnel-house] with all the veneration and respect that it is possible for such a people to discharge (Swanton 1946:721).

To the degree that this relationship can be anxious or burdensome to the living, further rites of passage are called for to mitigate this effect. Thus the Lincecum myth describes the veneration of ancestral bones during the allegorical march of the Choctaw to Nanih Waiya, but it also speaks of the "extraordinary and overwhelming" accumulation of such remains as "a great evil" and "oppressive" (Lincecum 1904: 521-524). That narrative pits the wishes of the Choctaw priesthood against those of a paramount chief. The priests advise that,

> This people must not cast away the precious remains of the fathers and mothers of this nation. They are charged by the spirits, who are hovering thick around us now, to take care of them; and carry them whithersoever the nation moves. And this we must not, we dare not fail to do. Were we to cast away the bones of our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, for the wild dogs to gnaw in the wilderness, our hunters would kill no more meat; hunger and disease would follow; the confusion and death would come; and the wild dogs would become fat on the unscaffolded carcasses of this unfeeling nation of forgetful people. The vengeance of the offended spirits would be poured out upon this foolish nation (1904:526).

To this portrait of terrible moral backlash is contrasted the opinion of the chief.

> I propose that we shall by general consent and mutual good feelings..., in the most respectful manner, bring together and pile up in a beautiful and tasteful style the vast amount of bones.... After this,...let all persons, old and young, great and small, manifest their respect for the dead, by their energy and industry in carrying dirt to cover them up, and let the work of carrying and piling earth upon them be continued until every heart is satisfied...for us to pile their bones all in the same heap and securely cover them up will be more pleasing to the spirits, than it will be to let them remain amongst the people (1904:528).

Thus the tale provides an agenda for restoring harmony amid ambivalent feelings toward the dead: tertiary burial of the curated bones in the context of a community rite of intensification. It can now be seen how the sacrilization initiated by secondary burial in the charnel-house, and the desacralization achieved by tertiary burial, can be analyzed as a second rite of passage, the termination of which may be thought of as embedded within a rite of intensification, with the logical point of articulation being the common rites of incorporation.

As an illustration, let us follow this sequence of primary, secondary, and tertiary burial through, as it was objectified among the Choctaw as described by various sources (Swanton 1931:170-177). This can be assisted with the aid of a diagram, Figure 11.

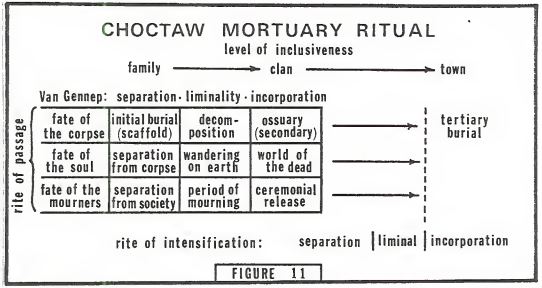


FIGURE 11

The accounts of Choctaw mortuary rites left by Bossu, by an anonymous French officer, Adair, Milfort, Bartram, and Romans, allow us to piece together a satisfactory account of mid-eighteenth century practices. The traditions conveyed to Cushman, Folsom, Byington, and Halbert date to a later time but can be used as supplementary sources. From the perspective of these accounts, practices seem to have varied

slightly among different segments of the Choctaw, but the essential features prior to the abandonment of secondary burial in the early years of the nineteenth century seem to have been fairly constant.

The rites of separation were well-marked, and they accord well with the conceptual outline of such rites provided by Hertz. They might be initiated by the actual death of an individual, or in the case of grave illness, a priest might initiate the rites by diagnosing impending death. In the latter case, physical separation of the body was immediate. After being washed and having the face painted, the ill patient was dressed in finery and placed on the ground outside the door of the house. Patients were then treated as if they were already dead, until actual death ensued from exposure; or alternatively the neck might be broken by the priest. Mourning began immediately upon accomplishing the physical separation of the body. The wife and relatives would begin to wail and cry in a standardized fashion, and a stereotyped rite of questioning the dead as to the cause of its unhappiness with earthly life followed closely. The near kin were required to make further preparations for mourning: the house of the deceased and all its provisions might be burned, or these might be sold at a nominal price. Dogs and horses belonging to the deceased would be killed so that their souls might accompany their owner to the spirit world. The meat of the slaughtered horses would be preserved for the feast marking the close of the transition rites. A fire would be kindled near the corpse outside the house, and would be maintained four days, in the belief that this would comfort the suddenly dispossed soul. While these preparations were being made, hired criers might come to the house to mourn.

The initial burial was effected by erecting an isolated scaffold either near the house opposite the door or in a grove at the margin of the town. The scaffold was built like a miniature house, with wattle-and-daub sides and a cedar bark roof, intended to serve as the "residence" of the corpse during the transition period. It was raised six or more feet from the ground on poles. The elaborateness of this scaffold varied with the importance of the individual interred. Those of high status individuals were decorated with red paint, whereas that of a child might be a simple pole framework. The sacred space defined by the scaffold might be stockaded or fenced against intruders, and mourning benches were placed around it or on one side. A chain made of grapevine links, the symbolism of which has been lost, hung from one of the poles.

The body was interred through one of the two open ends, covered with a blanket of deer or bear skin, or fabric. A quantity of goods was placed with the corpse, in the belief that they would be put to use by the soul on its journey. These goods might include a gun with powder and balls, a change of shoes, and some food.

The rites to this point served to objectify the separation of the corpse, the soul, and the mourners from their normally structured roles. Now began the liminal period marked by prolonged mourning by the immediate kin, the decomposition of the scaffolded corpse, and the temporary probation of the disassociated soul on earth. This period could last anywhere from two to eight months, the exact duration depending on the importance of the individual, the end being rather arbitrarily set by a class of itinerant priests known as "bone-pickers". The only

requirement seems to have been to allow enough time for the body to decompose sufficiently so that the defleshing "tools" of the bone-pickers, their fingernails, could be used effectively.

Both men and women in mourning distinguished themselves from the remainder of society in various ways. For both sexes, normally elaborate clothing and body painting was relinquished, and women in addition left their hair undressed and uncut. According to Folsom, men acted subdued, did not speak, ate little, and avoided the usual modes of male amusement. Women in mourning stayed at home entirely. Visits to the mourning benches at the scaffold were made twice daily. Such visits might last for half and hour or more, during which the shrouded mourners, which might include friends and visitors as well as the bereaved kin, would cry loudly or wail. Both sexes would participate, but women were more often seen at the scaffold than men.

The complex rites of incorporation, or final ceremonies in which the soul was incorporated into the spirit world, the corpse into the collective charnel-house, and the mourners into normal society, were initiated and presided over by the bone-picker. There seem to have been only a few bone-pickers among the Choctaw (Romans says there were five), both men and women, and these circulated among the villages performing the rites, having been previously informed about the deaths which had occurred in each village. Claiborne asserts that this was a clan office, that is, that there was one bone-picker for each of the clans, and this seems probable. Halbert's informants remembered that the several bone-pickers conferred with each other on the proper times to carry out their tasks, and that bundles of counting sticks were sent out to the bereaved kin to mark the days prior to the rites. This was a normal

Southeastern method for coordinating events. Bone-pickers were generally well-respected older adults (though Halbert disputes their prestige), who carried as a badge of their occupation long nails on the thumb, first, and middle fingers.

The bone-picker having arrived on the announced day, the relatives would assemble once again around the scaffold and upon the mourning benches. There would then ensue a period of loud wailing, followed by a more subdued weeping during which the benches were removed. The bone-picker would at this time be occupied by the construction of a hamper to receive the bones, made of split cane to which bone splints were sometimes added. This was painted red if the deceased had been a chief, and each hamper bore a clan insignia. The relatives would then either remove the corpse themselves from the scaffold to be defleshed, or allow the bone-picker to climb the scaffold to perform the task within it. The bone-picker would completely deflesh and dismember the bones, using only the fingernails. The bones were washed and allowed to dry, emphasizing their now purified state. If the work had been done upon the scaffold, the bone-picker would next descend with the bones, presenting them to the assembled kin with a speech. The skull was painted red, and the bones were placed within the hamper—Adair says in anatomical order, so that they might easily be reunited when the dead were eventually revived by a powerful spirit. The hamper was enclosed with a cloth. Milfort adds that at this time one of the bones was restored to the family, but there is no information regarding the use to which this removed bone was put. The defleshing was followed by another round of wailing.

The removed flesh was disposed of by throwing it into a field, or by burying it, or by setting it afire along with the burial scaffold.

In the latter case the flesh would be bundled and set to one side within the scaffold house by the bone-picker, and the whole would be summarily put to the torch. With this event, the final transformation of the corpse was complete.

This portion of the rites of incorporation was concluded by a feast given by the bereaved kin for friends and visitors paying their condolences. While the bone-picker was busy dissecting, the meal was being prepared, partially consisting if possible of the meat from the slaughter of the horses belonging to the deceased. The meal could only be served by the bone-picker, who did so after defleshing the corpse but without first washing his/her hands. This was a clear sign of the continued state of pollution among the mourners, which had not yet been relieved. The food was distributed according to rank, and Adair notes that a cheerful attitude prevailed, in contrast to the earlier grief and solemnity.

The final rites restoring the mourners to a profane state and assuring the soul passage to the spirit world took the form of a solemn procession to the charnel-house, at which the bones were deposited with their hamper. The procession was led by the bone-picker, and while it might be only a short walk to the edge of the village, it might otherwise be a matter of many days journey to a distant village in the case of a male, because of uxorilocal residence.

The charnel-house was usually situated in a remote place on the fringes of a village. According to some writers, including Bartram and Romans, these charnel-houses were village-level facilities, but they seem to have been mistaken, or rather misled on this point. Adair saw

three of them in one village, and further notes a taboo, which Lincecum seconds, against depositing the bones of one clan with those of another. The evidence weighs in favor of the proposition that Choctaw charnel-houses were actually clan-level facilities, as Adair and Milfort both say (in Swanton 1931:172, 174), and as Bushnell concluded (1920:98). The illusion of village-level charnel-houses could have arisen in connection with the documented association of clans with particular mother towns (see Swanton 1931:80).

The form of the charnel-house seems to have been variable. Both Adair and an anonymous French officer describe a covered cabin, essentially a larger version of the scaffold-house, in which the bone hampers were placed in rows on poles. Like the scaffold-house, the charnel-house was open on both ends and was strongly palisaded. Adair's description provides other details: a ladder on one side, a grapevine chain hung from the ladder, and a carved "dove" (but more probably a bird of prey) surmounting the structure. Romans' drawing of a charnel-house, on the other hand, depicts an open enclosure, together with seven poles bearing flags and (grapevine?) chains which are obviously prototypes for the similar poles placed around nineteenth century Choctaw burials.

The solemn procession to the place of secondary interment was led by the bone-picker. The mourners, as a symbol of their release from obligation, dressed in their finery. Women carried pitch-pine torches. The anonymous writer mentions wailing along the way, but both Adair and Bossu (in Swanton 1931:171-2) describe only subdued weeping. Arriving at the charnel-house, the procession encircled it, placed the hamper on the ground, and crouched with shrouded heads to begin the final wail. The bones were then deposited in the loft, completing the rite, and after paying the

bone-picker the mourners, now released, went their separate ways.

We come now to consider Choctaw tertiary burial, in the context of a calendrical rite of intensification in which the participation of the opposite moiety was enlisted. It can now be seen how each of the successive burials involves a larger segment of society: primary burial obligates the near kin exclusively; secondary burial obligates the clan exclusively; and tertiary burial obligates both moieties.

Among the Choctaw the rite of intensification was called the "Feast of Souls". It is parallel to the *Kut-nahin* ceremony among the Chitimacha (Gatschet 1883:8), and Swanton describes similar observances during the Tunica "corn fast" (Swanton 1946:729). The motives necessitating such rites have already been discussed. There is a difference of opinion concerning the frequency of the Feast of Souls: Bossu indicates an annual ceremony in early November, but Byington's informants remembered two ceremonies, one in the spring and the other in the fall. Bartram says that it depended upon filling the charnel-house, and was held on an appointed day.

Three distinct types of ceremonies are documented. In the first, each family (clan?) would assemble at the charnel-house to mourn. At this time the bones were taken out and repainted red, and then restored to their respective hampers. The kin then took up the hampers and in rank procession, took them to a distant place, the general populace following behind. The hampers were stacked in a pyramid and buried in an accretional mound of conical shape, under about four feet of earth. The procession is described by the early writers as a solemn event with much weeping. Upon their return, a feast was held at the end of the day, closing the ceremony. The second mode is described only by Byington,

whose informants remembered some details of the opposite moiety participation. He says that on the first day of the ceremony, the bereaved moiety would be occupied in wailing, while the opposite moiety simultaneously danced. On the second day these roles were reversed, symbolizing the release of obligations for the bereaved. The bones would then be returned to the charnel-house, rather than being interred. The third mode is discussed only by Halbert, who says that on this occasion the charnel-house was simply buried in place, that is, covered by a low mound.

The diagram (Figure 11) outlining primary, secondary, and tertiary disposal of eighteenth century Choctaw dead may also, with some transposition of specific modes, be used as a model of Mississippian forms of secondary and tertiary burial procedures. It has been observed that the addition of platform mantles at Mississippian mound sites is an expression of rites of incorporation within the context of community rites of intensification, and now the presence of tertiary burials within such mantles should pose no mysteries. They are likewise community expressions of rites of incorporation.

Examples of Mississippian mortuary practices can be cited that have specific analogs in the Choctaw data. Binford's Galley Pond Mound, a charnel-house covered in place by a low earth mantle (1972), is a simple expression of the kind of ritual practice described by Halbert for the Feast of Souls. More complex forms consist of repeatedly buried charnel houses, e.g. the Craig Mound at Spiro (Brown 1966), the Hollywood charnel-house mound (Thomas 1894:317-326), and the Lenoir Mound illustrated earlier in profile as Figure 4.

In general, the benefit of Hertzian analysis of mortuary ritual, which separates the events into sequent symbolic components, is that it offers the archaeologist a framework within which to discuss the interrelationships of the symbols and meanings which can be inferred from the archaeological data. It puts the events in terms by means of which they can be compared with other mortuary rites universally.

CHAPTER VIII
THE CHARACTER OF MISSISSIPPIAN RITUAL

The primary aim of this study has been to make an advance in understanding some of the symbols which provided the imagery for public ritual in Mississippian societies. This subject matter is broad and complex, and the published data relating to it form a large corpus from which to identify problems and select examples for investigation. My approach, therefore, has necessarily focused on a narrow set of sites and topics, out of which it was hoped would emerge some general heuristics which could explain and be tested against larger bodies of data. It is appropriate here to briefly review the line of argument.

Within an historical perspective, the theme of previous investigations of these issues by Swanton, Waring, and Howard was a demonstration of the importance of the diachronic link from Mississippian archaeology to the ethnohistorical record of the Southeastern Indians. These investigators found positive links between historically recorded ritual, icons, and myths on the one hand, and Mississippian ritual features and icons on the other. They concluded, from different perspectives and attending to different data, that historical Southeastern aboriginal religion was in essence a debased form of a uniform religious complex which reached its peak in Mississippian times, and that historical manifestations could therefore be used to make inferences about the ancestral forms known to archaeology.

This general argument was part of the justification for selecting as a point of entry for this study, an historic migration myth, the

Chekilli legend of the Muskogee Kasihta town. By applying the structural method of isolating replicating correspondence structures, a set of core symbols and relations were identified which could then be traced through metaphorical and concrete objectifications in Mississippian ritual features. It was observed that core symbols refer to the operation of a layered hierarchy of symbol sets in cognition; that is, that some symbol sets and metaphorical links are more deeply entrenched, and more broadly applicable and evocative than others. The concept of core symbols, then, designates a relative condition rather than an absolute within culturally shaped cognitive repertoires. What we seek to identify in Mississippian ritual is, in Firth's (1975:14) and Turner's (1974:64) terms a "root paradigm", which is in turn similar to Whitten's (1978:841) notion of a "master image paradigm". Turner (1974:64) develops the idea of a root paradigm as referring,

> not only to the current state of social relationships existing or developing between actors, but also to the cultural goals, means, ideas, outlooks, currents of thought, patterns of belief, and so on, which enter into those relationships, interpret them, and incline them to alliance or divisiveness. These root paradigms are not systems of univocal concepts, logically arrayed; they are not, so to speak, precision tools of thought.... Paradigms of this fundamental sort reach down to irreducible life stances of individuals, passing beneath conscious prehension to a fiduciary hold on what they sense to be axiomatic values, matters literally of life or death. Root paradigms emerge in life crises, whether of groups or individuals, whether institutionalized or compelled by unforeseen events.

Whitten (1978:841) emphasizes their role in everyday, as well as ritual, affairs.

> We find Canelos Quichua paradigmatic imagery to be as clearly discernable in contexts involving indigenous response to alien cultural logic and praxis as in contexts of shamanistic performance and pottery manufacture. Although the semantic transformations and symbolic processing of the master image paradigm is context-specific, the paradigm itself transcends contextuality. Paradigmatic structures are presumably part of a semiotic system by which imagery is transmitted through a contrastive set of signs. Symbolic processing is based on positional arrangement.

The Chekilli legend is appropriate to the task of seeking core symbolism because it, like other Southeastern migration myths, is an elaborate allegory referring not as much to an actual historical movement of people as to an agenda for community ritual and an expression of social relationships. Analysis of the myth revealed two polar terms, which were designated as Earth and Society. These are held in dynamic tension, and their mediation is the object of the prescribed ritual. The color symbol associated with Earth is red, and Earth is assigned a negative value (malevolence); the color symbol for Society is white and Society is assigned a positive value (benevolence). The myth turns out to be about the cosmological issue of autochthony—the overcoming of a primordial Earth-origin in search of a separate identity for the cultural sphere. One may test this set of proposed core symbols against the paradigmatic imagery they evoked in historic Muskogee (and other Southeastern Indian) institutions: the issues are manifested, with the color symbols retained, in the sphere of social organization, by definition of town moieties and clan moieties, and in burial programs (see Adair, in Swanton 1928a:389-391). The core symbols are appropriately assimilated to the institutional complex, and are consequently modified from the more fundamental sense in which they appear in myth. It might be proposed that these symbolic images constitute an important component of the "high tradition" of Southeastern world view, a relatively coherent symbolic order which can be prehistorically as well as historically identified. Moreover, these images are not inconsistent with the cosmological triad of Under World:This World:Upper World proposed by Hudson (1976:122-128).

It was argued that platform mound ceremonialism, a rite of intensification and a principal defining mode of Mississippianism, can be seen fruitfully as an objectification of the Earth:Society paradigm. The mound is an Earth symbol within the community, which Society must effectively extinguish through periodic ritual burial, employing "compromised earth," or culturally modified dirt.

In examining diachronic variability at a specific Mississippian mound site, Cemochechobee, it could be seen that the periodicity inherent in platform mound burial was in fact part of a larger periodicity, in which all ritual structures were regularly transformed stylistically, materially, and spatially. This was not normative uniformitarian or evolutionary change; it was deliberate masking and contrasting of successive configurations within the same community. This pattern was found to be consistent with the notion of past configurations as mana-laden, polluted, and taboo. Change was an aspect of ritual renewal through rites of intensification.

A brief look at synchronic spatial aspects of Mississippian and historic Southeastern "stages" or structures was intended to illustrate that such structures partition space to materially reflect concepts and symbols related to the ritual and domestic activities for which they are designed. They can frequently be recognized as microcosms symbolizing a limited range of basic cosmological ideas.

Finally a major category of rites of passage, funerals, were examined against Hertz's precocious formulation of the symbolic aspects of primary and secondary burial. Historic charnel-house ritual among the Choctaw was reviewed with this frame of reference, from which it was concluded that the phenomenon of tertiary burial in the context of

a community rite of intensification was of both archaeological and historical importance. The rites of incorporation within tertiary burial can be shown to be the logical point of articulation between funeral customs and platform mound ceremonialism, accounting for specific archaeological situations.

Nearly all of the foregoing has been devoted to issues which revolve around cosmology: those intricate, coherent, and deeply rooted sets of symbols, meanings, and relations which provide the paradigmatic imagery for thinking and acting in social worlds. There is no doubt that cosmological systems are intrinsically interesting in anthropology, witnessed by the vast literature devoted to them. They often seem to the observer to have a life of their own, with hidden relationships appearing at every turn and reinforcing their often astounding (to us) logical coherences, Though once a matter of some debate, it has today become almost a truism that such "primitive" systems of thought are manifoldly complex and thoroughly rational.

It is no wonder then, that large amounts of anthropological energies have been spent on unraveling non-Western belief systems. But there is a danger here: that this can become an end in itself, a sort of detective hobby whose marginal anthropological relevance makes it difficult to justify. Some care should certainly be exercised in avoiding this trap, by consistently and explicitly relating cosmological schema to bodies of theory which link them to their sociological armatures. On this issue I would take up the Durkheimian banner in asserting that there are positive and causal connections between the structures of cosmology and the structures of social relations. Elucidating the one illuminates the other.

The next few pages, then, will attempt to make good the promise made at the beginning of this study that some consideration would be made of the institutional organization of Mississippian ritual. There is nothing so separate or distinctive about this topic that it can be treated independently of its ritual content, although some investigators have proceeded as if this were so. On the contrary, I would suggest that the greatest barrier to the recognition of particular institutional complexes in Mississippian societies has been a lack of attention to the patterning of their associated symbols. My argument, which follows from the discussion of core symbolism in platform mound ceremonialism, is that it is useful to distinguish two discrete sets of institutional complexes within Mississippian ritual.

It could be argued that a traditional point of view among Southeastern archaeologists in regard to the institutional basis for Mississippian ritual has been that, for each regional Mississippian culture, the ritual belief corpus was a single system associated particularly with paramount social statuses. Mississippian cultures were sometimes considered to be primitive "theocracies" ruled by "priest-chiefs", who served not only as secular administrators but also as principal religious functionaries. Many of these ideas seem to be fabrications, but others were based, at least loosely, on the historic accounts of Natchez social organization. Natchez society was highly stratified, dominated by the "Great Sun", a despotic paramount chief whose office was surrounded by elaborate ritual prescriptions and taboos.

Within such a model for Mississippian society, the most facile and least troublesome way of accounting for the elaborate ritual paraphernalia and iconography that was known from the larger Mississippian

"ceremonial centers," was to regard it as a single "ceremonial complex" central to Mississippian ritual. The idea of a single, ancestral "ceremonial" underlying historic Natchez, Creek, and Chickasaw ritual is explicit both in Waring and Holder's initial definition of the "Southern Cult" (Southeastern Ceremonial Complex) (1945:27) and in Waring's later amplification (1968:31). The initial hypothesis of the spread of the iconographic complex as the result of a messianic revitalization movement similar to the Ghost Dance Religion was not long lived. But both the recognition of the "Southern Cult" as an acceptable taxon for investigation and the assumption of its premier role in a religious complex associated with chiefly power have remained intact. Waring's (1968:66) early summary may be quoted in full.

> The following hypothesis seems to us the best explanation of the present data: The archaeological spread of Middle Mississippi represents the original migration from a small area of groups possessing a closely-related ceremonial which was strongly oriented to agriculture. It probably contained the basic fire-sun-deity beliefs, fire ceremonial, and the chieftain in a strong central position. The temple mound was also in use in its dual function as temple and dwelling of the Chief. The Southern Cult seems to represent the appearance of a new ceremonial integration on a somewhat later and more mature level, yet based largely on the earlier ceremonial.

Here already, and despite the restrictive connotations of the term "cult" (Phillips and Krieger had immediately objected to the usage), the conventional gestalt of the complex was clearly that of a major pervasive series of religious ideas. Waring's term "ceremonial" appears in context to mean an integrated central corpus of public ritual. There is little room here for any other possible modes of Mississippian ritual which might have had little to do with the Southern Cult.

Phelps (1970:89-90) has compared the complex to a "state religion partially similar to that commonly shared by the cultures encompassed in the Mesoamerican area." More recently, Phillips and Brown (1978:169) virtually equate the Southern Cult with the whole of Mississippian ideology.

> "Cult" is, however, a misnomer, a word of insufficient coverage. It would probably be more accurate to describe the phenomenon as an interconnected medley of cults, partly syncretized, on the way perhaps to becoming a pan-Southeastern ideology.

Elsewhere Brown (1976:116) approves of the view that "The Cult is essentially the ceremonial 'culture' of the Mississippian period." Perhaps the labels themselves are sufficient to make the point that the iconographic complex in question has continually been in some way equated with the whole sphere of Mississippian ritual as it has been vaguely perceived. One speaks of The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex, not A Southeastern Ceremonial Complex.

Perhaps this needs to be clarified. I have no quarrel with the usefulness of the Southern Cult taxon. Like Phillips and Brown (1978:169) I believe that it is "as much in need of investigation as ever," especially in regard to the question of conventional meanings. Nor do I wish to downplay the obviously critical role played by Cult paraphernalia within Mississippian cultures. And finally, it would be futile to deny that Southern Cult iconography is intimately connected with, and arises from, a broad ideological base. The point is simply that the complex of symbols and meanings known as the Southern Cult, even if it were possible to decode it in some detail, would not be equivalent to Mississippian religion, belief, or ideology, and especially could not

be linked at all to whole, and I would suggest crucial, blocks of Mississippian public ritual.

The need for a subdivision of the institutional bases for public ritual in Mississippian societies can, I think, be demonstrated at least in a preliminary way. The dichotomy in symbolic discriminations between those discussed earlier for platform mound ceremonialism and those which underlie the Southern Cult should already be obvious. Whereas this study has discussed autochthonomy, and has dealt mainly with the paradigmatic imagery of such formulae as Earth:Society, the Southern Cult invokes a completely different set of symbolic images: again following Waring, "The Southern Cult was based on maize agriculture and... cyclic new-fire rites and the fire-sun-deity concept were at its core" (1968:69). The two different symbolic sets may well be related at some deep ideological level, but it would certainly be a mistake to ignore that their objectifications at Mississippain sites are contextually distinct as well. The situation seems to call for an integrative concept allowing the recognition of more than one institutional framework in the organization of ritual and belief for a given society.

Just such an integrative concept is provided by Anthony F. C. Wallace. This is his "cult institution", which is defined as "a set of rituals all having the same general goal, all explicitly rationalized by a set of similar or related beliefs, and all supported by the same social group" (1966:75). There are typically several discrete cult institutions within the same "religious" community, having different sets of directors ("clergy") and participants, and different sets of supporting myths. "Each of these cult institutions is related to others, in one way or another, and many of them join forces in major

ritual sequences, dovetailing and overlapping in scheduling, personnel, material apparatus, and beliefs, but each maintaining a distinct and autonomous role" (ibid:76). Thus within what might loosely be called "Mississippian religion" (a rather unsatisfactory usage), one might expect to identify specific institutions that are more tightly organized internally than is the religious sphere in general. It is important to the present argument to keep in mind that each cult institution may conjure a distinct set of symbolic imagery, and that each is typically directed by a discrete class of "officers", depending on the relative formality of the institution.

Now, as applied to the Mississippian case, it can be demonstrated with some confidence that at least two relatively independent symbolic complexes occur, and furthermore that these turn up in consistently different ritual contexts. One set is associated primarily with platform mound ceremonialism and mortuary ritual. Its symbolic foundations can be identified with the problems of autochthony and purification, and with a fundamental Earth:Society dichotomy whose elements in turn evoke a nexus of associated images that pervade such realms as social organization. Another set is associated primarily (exclusively?) with ritual surrounding superordinate social segments including warrior-chief offices. Its symbolic foundations are drawn from several sources; largely from cosmogonic mythology, also from the technological apparatus of warfare.

This is the basis for inferring a preliminary model of ritual organization among Mississippian societies. I propose that there were at least two distinct sets of cult institutions, in Wallace's sense of

the term—two "Southern Cults," if you will—which in each society existed in opposition and controlled different segments of ritual. A good case can be made for identifying the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex as a reflection of a chiefly cult institution. The other cult institution marked by platform mound ceremonialism is arguably an independent priestly ritual association normally subordinate to the former, yet wielding considerable power far beyond that of potential rival cult associations. To the degree that this dichotomy between chiefly and priestly ritual can be supported, it becomes possible to align Mississippian societies of the Southeastern United States with a worldwide class of pre-state societies in which chiefly and priestly ritual are held in tension and opposition, e.g. the Tallensi, the Choctaw, the Ndembu, etc. (see Turner 1969:99). In such societies, the power deriving from ritual sanctity does not all flow from a single source, but is dichotomized in a structure which, though politically asymmetrical, is ideologically diametric. Such a ritual structure acts, arguably, as a power buffer for chiefly authority, which is absent in "sacred kinship" types of state society in which the authority of cult institutions are effectively combined under the auspices of the state.

In the discussion that follows, the use of priestly and chiefly ritual as general dichotomous terms in reference to Mississippian ritual will be understood to mean that such dualisms existed within particular Mississippian societies. While the implication is that these institutional types were roughly comparable in their major features across political boundaries, I am not asserting that either

priestly or chiefly cult institutions were in any way organizationally linked together across the Southeast. There is no good evidence for any institutional structures transcending the provincial chiefdom. A case can be made, nevertheless, that the priestly cult/chiefly cult opposition as a diametric type of ritual organization arose concurrently throughout much of the Southeast and contributes much to our present-day gestalt of what Mississippianism is.

I am thus in full agreement with the statement of Phillips and Brown cited earlier that the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex reflects a syncretized set of contemporaneous cults. This is what I am claiming to be the "chiefly cult institution", one half of a ritual pair among Mississippian chiefdoms. There are two qualifications: Firstly, I insist on the separation of the iconographic complex from the institutional complex, an important distinction not always observed. Secondly, I am not quite sure what their term "interconnected" means in reference to this set of cults. They are certainly connected as regards iconography and style of paraphernalia, and there are obvious, though poorly understood, exchange relationships; however I would eschew any implication of cooperative enterprise or formal mechanisms of protracted interaction among complementary cults.

While a number of southeasternists, most recently Phillips and Brown (1978:157-209), have devoted considerable energies to the description of these "connections", there have not been to my knowledge any recent in-depth attempts to anthropologically model in an explicit way the nature of the exchange of ideas and objects that the distribution of the Southern Cult represents. Since the popular demise of the revitalization movement hypothesis of the 1940's, the predominant trend in

reference to these distributions seems to have been the use of such serviceable but essentially noncommittal terms as "trade", "exchange", "contact", "interaction", "syncretization", etc.

It is obvious that the nature of this dimly perceived long-distance exchange is bound up with the social significance of the exchanged ideas and objects. The thrust of recent research suggests that that significance consists of their role in the sanctification of power in developing rank societies where coercive authority was otherwise lacking. As Durkheim taught, and as Rappoport (1971) has reiterated, the concept of the sacred or of sanctity can be thought of as a sociological mechanism of conserving conventional behaviors and orders, by investing them with unquestionable truth. Those who are in a position to control the flow of ultimate truth are also in a position to sanctify their offices, and consequently to undergird their real power. As Mary Helms (1979:176) has recently pointed out,

> Those assigned to leadership positions must evidence control of a particular kind of knowledge: knowledge of the nonordinary and of the nonconcrete; knowledge that explains and reaffirms the validity, the truthfulness (the sanctity) of the cognized model in terms of which the rulership claims its powers and position and the members of society are enjoined to act. This esoteric knowledge of that which is most abstract and non-mundane—of the "origins" and "nature" of things (the cosmos), of the fundamental or universal "processes" by which all things... operate, of the place of human society in such a universal system—then becomes a resource itself, a controllable form of "elite goods", a resource that is as important for the operation of society as are the material products of the economy.

As a model for the long-distance transfer of exotic goods and ideas among chiefly elites, Helms' study (ibid) of the behavior of Panamanian chiefs is worthy of close attention. Helms argues that foreign exotica, including "sacred" gold ornaments, were sought by Panamanian chiefs in the context of gathering foreign esoteric knowledge as a "scarce resource",

in order to enhance their personal prestige and power. Citing ethnohistorical evidence, she suggests that chiefs and younger "leaders in training" themselves travelled great distances to other chiefly centers in their quest for knowledge and esoterica.

Many southeasternists feel that the continued use of the term "cult" in reference to the Etowah/Moundville/Spiro iconographic complex is a bit of antiquarianism that pays unnecessary homage to the long-abandoned idea that the complex represented a kind of messianic revitalization movement. For these, "Southern Cult" joins the ranks of the earlier jargon associated with the phenomenon, e.g."Buzzard Cult", in favor of the more noncommittal "Southeastern Ceremonial Complex". Thus my insistence upon reintroducing the term "cult" in a sociologically specific sense in discussing these issues will undoubtedly appear inexcusably anachronistic and reactionary to some. My defense is in the definition of "cult institution" as a unit of analysis by means of which ritual practices within a given society may be segregated according to their socio-structural configurations. The term has none of the connotations of ephemeral status, reactionary basis, or subcultural emphasis associated with familiar kinds of cult behavior, nor does it necessarily imply active participation in a revitalization movement.

The next case to be made is that the contexts and uses of the icons and paraphernalia of the bulk of the Southern Cult are consistent with Wallace's criteria for a cult institution, that is, that the ritual uses are "rationalized by a set of similar or related beliefs, and all supported by the same social group." The second criterion, that of support by a definite social segment, will be taken up first.

From the earliest discussions of the Southern Cult as a coherent entity, it was recognized that the artifacts in question pertained not to the whole of Mississippian expressive culture, but to a specialized segment of it with ritual connotations, hence the term "cult" (Phillips 1940:366). Holder went further in 1947, citing the occurrence of the materials in burials receiving highly differential treatment, as indicating a link between the Cult and "class stratification, clans, and class prerogatives" (in Williams 1968:77). Thus a connection between ritual paraphernalia and chiefly power in the prehistoric Southeast was suspected as probable over 30 years ago, although the lack of contextual data and the theoretical apparatus of the time did not allow further refinement.

More recently, a great deal of better controlled data and analyses, especially at the "Big Three" Cult sites (Etowah, Moundville and Spiro), have made possible a quantum advance in understanding the hierarchical structures of Mississippian chiefdoms and the contexts (if not the roles and meanings) of ritual paraphernalia within these social structures. The literature that has accumulated relevant to this issue is too unwieldy for a critical review in short space, and with that as an excuse I will include only brief commentary here. The conclusion of all of this work that is most relevant to the present issue is stated summarily by James Brown: "As symbols the artifacts and art motifs [of the Southern Cult] relate to prestige structures based on the sanctity of power in chiefdom-type societies" (1976:126). Holder's suspicion of 1947, in other words, has become explicitly justifiable through modern research.

Lewis Larson's excavations during the late 1950s for the Georgia Historical Commission at the Etowah site (Larson 1971) have served to

clarify the archaeological contexts of the rich Southern Cult materials recovered earlier by Cyrus Thomas and Warren K. Moorehead at Mound C of that site. Mound C was a five-staged platform mound supporting a series of successive nondomestic structures of unknown use. A palisade-like wall surrounded the mound, rebuilt several times. Associated with the final mantle, around the mound periphery, was a series of elaborate tomb burials many of which contained exotic Southern Cult furnishings and adornments. By comparing these burials with those in the common cemetery areas at the site, Larson concluded that the Mound C burials indicated an internally ranked, hereditary descent group controlling trade in exotic materials, and that the Cult icons and paraphernalia were "used by them to express and validate their social position" (ibid:67).

Mortuary remains from the largest of the "Big Three" Cult centers, Moundville, have been analysed in depth by Christopher S. Peebles (1974). The data were derived from the early excavations at the site by Clarence B. Moore and from the massive work accomplished during the period 1929-1941 by the Alabama Museum of Natural History. Based on a data set consisting of a matrix of 719 provenienced burials against documented classes of grave associations, Peebles clustered the burials using both agglomerative and subdivisive numerical strategies. These analyses produced clusters of related burials tending to confirm his hypothesis that two major "dimensions" (strata) should be discernable: one ascriptive and associated with sociotechnic items of dress and office, the other reflecting achieved statuses without the associated sociotechnic paraphernalia. Peebles' conclusions relative to the "same social group" criterion for the Southern Cult as a reflection of a single, discrete type of cult institution are as follows.

> Both cluster analyses produced the expected two dimensions of burials and social personae. The first dimension is defined by inclusion of supra-local, Southern Cult items of dress and office as grave goods. These definitive items are copper axes, small copper celts, copper ear spools, round and oblong copper gorgets, copper hair ornaments, copper symbols badges, stone ceremonial celts, stone discs and palettes, various minerals, shell beads, shell gorgets and perhaps effigy vessels. The second dimension is defined by the use of various vessel forms, discoidals, projectile points, bone awls and a number of other technomic items as grave goods. (ibid:181-182).

James A. Brown (1971) has similarly reanalysed the mortuary data from the Spiro site in search of patterns suggesting ranking in a chiefdom-type social organization. Brown's data come primarily from a series of elite burial contexts within the spectacular Craig Mound, a rebuilt mortuary facility. The abundant Southern Cult materials from the Craig Mound are associated with an ascribed status dimension which is itself internally ranked. As Peebles found for the Moundville data, Brown sees evidence for definite offices linked to particular Southern Cult artifact classes. According to Brown (ibid:101),

> ... it can be advanced that the copper plate and extended burial define a special segment of the Spiro population with all ages and both sexes represented. Within this pool there are ascribed rights to copper plate burial available to some, possibly only males, and that adults (presumably males) are eligible for attaining the third status which is at the pinnacle of power [litter burials accompanied by engraved Southern Cult Busycon shell cups]. The latter status carries with it an office and the power to accumulate and distribute objects of high ascribed value.

All told, then, the present data are not inconsistent with the proposition that Southern Cult iconography and paraphernalia represent a discrete symbolic assemblage intimately associated with "the same social group", that is, that we are dealing with a cult institution in Wallace's sense. The general type of social organization encountered in MIssissippian systems has been productively modeled as consisting of a ranked

series of exogamous kin segments (clans), including a superordinate segment from which were drawn the candidates for ramified systems of warrior-chief offices. Thus the nature of the social group deriving the benefits and prestige from the sanctified symbol set we call the Southern Cult, is clearly on the order of a chiefly clan (although the usage is guarded), within which more particular Southern Cult icon sets and presumably the accompanying esoteric knowledge were the property of the holders of office.

Brown (1976:128), however, has explicitly denied that the Southern Cult can be a reflection of any single cult "in the sociological and ideological sense", since most of the Cult objects can be demonstrated to be status-displaying symbols within different "organizational networks". For Brown, "the use of...Cult features for symbolizing privileged status is most obviously a hierarchical feature of Mississippian Period cultural systems and only secondarily an ideological one" (ibid). The first thing of concern here is the apparently unnecessary and unjustified distinction between symbols as markers of status versus symbols as markers of specialized religious knowledge (ideology). As stated earlier, ritual paraphernalia and knowledge can be manipulated as a "scarce resource," increasing the prestige of and sanctifying otherwise secular social domains. In such cases the hierarchical meanings of a given symbol set necessarily imply the ideological meanings of the same set. It is far more efficacious, it seems to me, to view the two levels of meaning as interdependent.

The other part of Brown's argument, that the iconographic complex cannot reflect a single cult because it relates to three distinct

"organizational networks", is another matter. These three "networks" are 1) an elite associated with war related sociotechnic paraphernalia such as batons, ceremonial axes, and the "bi-lobed arrow"; 2) a more exclusive elite associated with falcon paraphernalia, which Brown associates at Spiro with a specific "war captain" status; and 3) the mortuary temple system (ibid:126-127). Not to overlook the extremely significant point made by Brown that the status/prestige systems of Mississippian chiefdoms are linked by the Southern Cult to a warrior or warfare complex, there is nevertheless some reason to question the partitioning of the Cult materials in this way. This is especially the case since the division is made mainly on the basis of subject matter rather than on context.

The first two divisions are, as Brown acknowledges, different in scale. Essentially, one is a subset of the other. The elaborate falcon impersonator theme has consistent association with the trappings of the more general warrior-elite group. While different roles or offices within superordinate social strata are definitely suggested by such associations and are expectable, it has not been demonstrated that such offices and roles pertain to broader social units that are in any way discrete. To point out that superordinate segments of chiefdom-type societies are internally ramified, with different symbol-sets and trappings associated with various offices, ranks, and roles, is not to invalidate the thesis that the segment itself is a coherent unit ideologically and symbolically.

The troublesome third "organizational network", the mortuary temple complex, does not seem to hold up alone as an institutional source of

Southern Cult iconography. In both Moundville and Spiro iconography, death-related motifs such as skulls and forearm bones interchange freely with motifs related to warfare and other subjects. Other than the fact that items bearing such motifs are found in burials, there is no demonstrable connection with the charnel-house facility itself at any site. Similarly, the "mortuary figurines," at least at Etowah (Larson 1971:65), occur in contexts indistinguishable from those which yield other kinds of Southern Cult paraphernalia, including sociotechnic weaponry. And this fits rather well with the proposition of priestly-chiefly structural independence being put forward here: In postcontact times mortuary ritual was priestly, not chiefly, business in the Southeast.

Thus, while the point that distinctive subsets discernible within the whole complex of supra-local Southern Cult iconography are linked to particular offices, ranks, and roles is well taken, the proposition that these were linked together within a single cult institution remains intact. Brown's objection to relating the whole complex to a single "religious cult" seems to stem mainly from an implicit restriction of that term to very limited kinds of social phenomena—which is quite different from the definition of "cult institution" as the term is invoked here. Brown's challenge turns out to be mainly a matter of semantics.

Wallace's other criterion for the identification of cult institutions, that their ritual uses be "explicitly rationalized by a set of similar or related beliefs", is impossible to conclusively demonstrate for the proposed chiefly cult institution at this point, although there are many suggestive clues. We will, of course, never know how explicit

the rationalization of Southern Cult iconography was to the ritual participants. But the very interchangeability of many Southern Cult motifs and the predictability of their themes do point toward the coherence of the ideological subset they represent. We actually know very little about the meanings of these elements, and little research has been directed to this issue. The few, piecemeal studies that have appeared, however, (e.g. Waring 1968:33-47; Hudson 1976:122-169; Lankford n.d.), uniformly suggest direct relationships between the iconographic motifs and the cosmogonic segment of the Southeastern mythological corpus, i.e. those myths which address "origins". Lankford's (1975) research strongly indicates that this cosmogonic corpus arises from a series of archaic pan-American mythological strata, many of the elements of which predate Mississippian cultures in the Southeastern United States (cf. Phelps 1970).

Turning back to the provisionally proposed priestly cult institution, it may now be reiterated more strongly that both the symbolic foundations and the apparent social contexts of platform mound ceremonialism differ markedly with the respective symbolic foundations and apparent social contexts of the Southern Cult. This is not to say that chiefly ritual in the Southeast was solely bound up with cosmogonic imagery, or that it had nothing to do with the Earth:Society core symbolism. Certainly among the historical examples this was not the case. We might provisionally state the relationship in terms of color symbolism as follows: if priestly ritual is a cult of the red-and-white, then chiefly ritual is an esoteric cult of the white alone. The major objective point of overlap is predictably mortuary ritual, since while the mortuary rites

of passage may have been within the priestly sphere (e.g. the Choctaw), nevertheless chiefs and their retinues die and must be processed appropriately.

Other than platform mound ceremonialism, we can unfortunately point to virtually no other direct evidence of the organization of the priestly sphere in Mississippian societies. This may be the combined result of the actual lesser visibility of priestly paraphernalia in the archaeological remains, and simply not knowing what to look for. Such evidence might, for example, lie in the procedure of placing ritual offerings on a mound summit just prior to the construction of a mantle (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979:195-196).

Thus the archaeological case for a separate priestly cult institution is not particularly strong in itself. Nevertheless, accepting Waring's argument that the historic Muskogee busk ceremonies are the recent transformations of prehistoric rites of intensification involving platform mounds, it seems highly significant that the Muskogee busk was essentially a priestly function with the enlisted assistance of chiefs, warriors, and *henîha*.

In summary then, I have argued for the existence in Mississippian cultural systems of cult institutions that were diametrically opposed ideologically, a politically paramount one centering around a warrior-chief, his retinue, and kin, and the other centering around a priesthood. The ritual complex constituting the priestly cult institution included and focused upon community rites of intensification emphasizing purification—most conspicuously platform mound ceremonialism, an intensive enterprise suggesting considerable power. The symbols invoked by this institution consists of modifications of the paradigmatic Earth:Society

formulae. These symbols, like those invoked by the chiefly cult institution in the display of sanctity and power, are deeply embedded within streams of folklore and belief which can be shown to predate the systems at hand.

This is about as far as the argument can be carried at this point without further directed research. One might well, indeed, accuse the proposition of being already far too conjectural. In defense of it, I will readily admit that such a dichotomy may be ultimately too simple and too naive to account for the formidable and complex array of Mississippian period ritual. Its main value, and the reason it is formulated in this way, is to draw attention to the classificatory distinction between the types of ritual examined in this study, and the ritual relevance on the other hand of the well-known Southern Cult, seen here as a coherent corpus of ritual symbols.

Since the claim has been made that the opposition of chiefly and priestly cult institutions may have arisen as a <u>diametric type</u> of ritual organization, it is imperative to document the concurrence of the rise of each of the two proposed institutions. If this surmise is correct, it has implications that must be taken into account in explaining the evolutionary development of incipient chiefdoms in the Southeast out of essentially egalitarian tribal "Big Man" societies. It is of interest, then, to quickly recount the circumstances of historical development of the two key ceremonial complexes, the platform mound complex and the Southern Cult, as they are presently known.

The imagery of the Earth:Society distinction underlying platform mound ceremonialism, especially as reflected in red:white color

symbolism, is definitely present in the pre-Mississippian Southeast. Indeed the idea of a mound-as-Earth symbol probably underlies much of the Hopewellian stratum of mortuary ritual (though not as employed in rites of intensification). Mississippian platform mound ritual can in this sense be seen as a reformulation of older elements on a new (Mesoamerican?) model and in the context of a new cult institution. The Mississippian class of platform mounds as defined earlier, on the basis of current dating evidence, appeared no earlier than A.D. 800, and by A.D. 900 the idea had spread throughout most of the nuclear Southeast. Whether or not we are justified in linking its spread to the appearance of a particular class of cult institution among various societies, the rapidity of this spread must be considered quite remarkable.

The rise of the distinctive social use of cosmogonic imagery which is the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex, has, in contrast, a more spotty history, but one fully concurrent with the former. Certain iconographic elements and artifacts that have been included in the complex, such as the pole spud, the forked eye, and the long-nosed god mask appear at about A.D. 900. These are geographically widespread, from Aztalan in Wisconsin, to Harlan in Oklahoma, to Grant Mound in Florida. Most of the other elements in the complex were introduced later (Brown 1976:123-125; Williams 1975; Kneberg 1959; Muller 1966; Phillips and Brown 1978), including the well-known "falcon-impersonator" paraphernalia. Within the complex various late phases can also be identified, with survivals into historic times. Few of the particular motifs themselves have histories pre-dating Mississippian times in the Southeast (Phelps 1970), but as stated earlier, many of them seem to be based upon ideas which

can be shown to have been present within a pre-Mississippian folkloric stratum.

In a sense, then, both types of provisional cult institutions can be viewed as revitalizations of older elements in new iconographic and institutional dress (cf. Wallace 1966:209-215). Both types rose to prominence concurrently, although the respective histories are asymmetrical. Judging strictly by measurable public energies expended in ritual, the platform mound mode of ceremonialism is vastly more impressive than any other for the period. This is perhaps to be expected; the paradigmatic imagery behind platform mound ceremonialism we judge to be fundamental public modes of Mississippian world view. But the socially specialized and limited use of esoteric cosmogonic imagery as legitimizing political authority is much more superficial in character, though it validated greater political power. The difference is, perhaps, in some ways analogous to the contrast between the Christian Old and New Testaments, and their respective cults in the early Christian era.

Thus the story of the evolutionary rise of chiefdom-type societies in the Southeastern United States is perhaps closely linked to the story of the concurrent rise to prominence of two complementary types of cult institutions, each of which was differently administered and each of which sponsored different ritual complexes. These institutions were importantly asymmetrical in power, influence, and ideological foundations.

CHAPTER IX
OF MOUNDS AND METAPHORS

As we approach the topic of the validation of the heuristics introduced in this study, let us return momentarily to the diachronic problem of reconciling Mississippian ritual features with historic Southeastern Indian ritual. This was the starting point for the important early attempts by Swanton, Waring, and others towards understanding the symbolic dimensions of Mississippian ritual, and it was also the starting point of this study. And while it might to some degree be an artifact of method, our findings have done nothing to discredit the idea that the two different periods are fundamentally comparable as regards world view and the symbolic foundations of ritual. Sets of possible analogies based upon ethnohistorical literature are abundant and suggestive; these leads have not been followed here because of the much narrower goals of this study. Nevertheless it is more than just a possibility that many historical manifestations of Southeastern ritual are logical, metaphorical transformations in an unbroken stream of Mississippian, let us say Southeastern, ritual thought. Part of the test of adequacy of our present notions will depend upon thorough symbolic analyses of Southeastern ethnohistorical sources and linguistic data. This is a task which offers great promise, yet it has been barely begun.

The understandings which are forthcoming from such studies are not solely one-way. The illumination of Mississippian symbolism has perhaps as much to contribute to understanding historical manifestations of

Southeastern ritual as the other way around. Not to eschew the vital study of change, there is little excuse for arbitrarily building analytical walls between archaeological, ethnohistoric, ethnographic, folkloric, and linguistic data, if the goal is to understand symbols and meanings. Certainly locked up within the grammars and lexicons of extant Southeastern languages, whose divergences are glottochronologically placed at times predating the Mississippian Period (Springer and Witkowski 1980), is information not only on Mississippian ritual symbolism, but also on social organization, economics, technology, warfare, migration, etc. My discussion elsewhere of the Muskogee term *tašo* and how it clarifies the symbolism of mound ceremonialism (Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979:206-210) is only a minor example of what can be accomplished.

One further example will be presented to bolster the case for a symbolic perspective on diachronic problems. The issue at hand is that, while in Mississippian cultures huge earthen mounds supporting public buildings were made, their historic descendants seem to have dropped the practice suddenly and entirely. Instead, the recent Creek, Yuchi, and Seminole have constructed miniscule earth mounds, only a few feet in diameter and height, in association with the square ground complex. These small, bare piles of dirt were used mainly as speaker's platforms or as elements in busk-related dances. The question is whether or not this is really a "remnant" or somehow a vague remembrance of the vast mound building rituals of earlier centuries.

James Howard (1968:149) suspected that there must be some relationship between the two types of mound building, based simply on the observation that both types had ritual associations. He found no way, nevertheless, of demonstrating the link. A later contribution on my part

(Schnell, Knight, and Schnell 1979:206, 209) to this perplexing historical disjunction was to point out that the Tuckabatchee, prior to the Removal in the early nineteenth century, employed quite large platform mounds (without summit structures) in ritual (Swanton 1932), and that they again used large dance platforms of earth during the early twentieth century in Oklahoma (Swanton 1928a:Pl. 5; Fig. 47). But this observation still contributes little to any appreciation of the significance of the proposed link.

A much better insight is prefigured by the conclusion earlier in this study that the Mississippian mound itself is a symbolic representation independent of its post-construction institutional use. The most basic symbolic meaning of the mound has nothing to do with its size or specific configuration, which varies with intended uses in various sociocultural contexts divorced from the ritual circumstances of its construction. Thus the fact that modern Creek, Yuchi, or Seminole ceremonial mounds are small, and that they lack summit structures, presents no symbolic difficulty, since summit structures and consequent size of platform mounds were never connected directly with the core ideas of the platform mound in the first place.

The search for and systematization of patterns of Mississippian symbols results in a picture which is essentially static and descriptive, which belies the dynamic nature of paradigmatic imagery. Allusions have been made from time to time concerning the role of metaphor in linking the symbols and in determining their objectified permutations in realms of social life. These allusions betray some theoretical assumptions which need to be laid out more explicitly.

The first assumption is that public ritual is structured to convey information. In Wallace's (1966:236) terms, it is "stereotyped communication," which "coordinates the preparation for action among several organisms, and which does...this more quickly and reliably than can be accomplished...by non-stereotyped, informational communication." The meanings and intentions which are conveyed in ritual are multiple and complex, and may be apprehended by the participants at different conscious and unconscious levels. But its highly structured nature dictates a simplifying effect: "...the content of ritual refers to a simpler homogeneity and explains the mystic unity which lies behind the phenomenological diversity. Thus ritual, and its supporting belief system, constitute a world of symbols that is simple and orderly" (ibid:239). Part of the message is usually related to the social order: the nature of statuses and their relations, and the position of the social order within a cosmological system of classification. As stated in the introduction, myth is treated here as a category or mode of ritual, not simply a charter for ritual and a rationalization for it, as Wallace has it (ibid:249), nor completely a discursive mode with a life of its own, divorced from behavior (Lévi-Strauss 1973:473). That is, the distinction between myth and ritual is not to be equated with the distinction between thought and behavior.

The second assumption is that symbols are not free-floating images, but are connected in definite ways. Their connections are the "grammar" of ritual as an idiom. They are structured in thought by 1) the creation of a dialectic of oppositions, and 2) their arrangement in formal analogies. The idea of an analogy rests on the recognition of two types of relationship, contiguity (metonymy) and likeness (metaphor)

(Jakobson and Halle 1956). It is by means of analogies that relatively deep and static symbolic paradigms or image clusters are cognitively related to phenomenal events. This is what is meant by the metaphorical transformation of core symbolism in ritual objectifications.

A third assumption is that metaphor is the "engine" of symbolic action, and consequently of adaptation as mediated by symbol systems. Metaphor provides ritual with its dynamic aspect, by allowing ritual actors to reformulate their present statuses and situations in light of symbolically defined ideals. As James Fernandez puts it, "the semantic movement accomplished by metaphor is from the abstract and inchoate in the subject to the more concrete, ostensive, and easily graspable in the metaphoric predicate" (1974:123).

Fernandez's useful description of metaphors in relation to ritual action (ibid:125) emphasizes how metaphors provide a dynamic for ritual in contrast to symbols, which considered alone are static. He introduces the notion of "quality space": a series of axes or dimensions along which metaphor valuates its subjects, e.g. as good or bad, this-world or other-world, static or dynamic. Thus ritual in operation defines for each participant, through its stereotyped imagery related to core symbols, their respective position in relation to quality space. Metaphor provides a plan for correcting inappropriate positions. Participants enter into ritual in the belief that their place in quality space is incorrect, to be transformed toward a more suitable, usually a more sacred, state.

> A ritual is to be analysed, then, as a series of organizing images or metaphors put into operation by a series of... ceremonial scenes. Each of these scenes plays its part in realizing the implications of the image-plan....Through such ceremonial scenes, men become the metaphor predicated upon them (ibid:125).

It has been shown that the Earth:Society (or Under World:This World: Upper World) axis in Mississippian thought is a valuated dimension, with negative and positive values respectively. It is a dimension along which ritual actors (as in the Chekilli legend) defined themselves as being either in a satisfactory or an unsatisfactory state. Thus Mississippian ritual, through various procedures, served to provide explicit plans for the redefinition of social persons on this dimension. This is reflected in the common perception of Southeastern Indian religious values as emphasizing "purification".

An important task, then, is neglected in the search for Mississippian symbols and meanings as static forms. These need to be probed in search of their "grammar", the metaphoric and metonymic connections through which ritual acts achieved relevance in day to day experience. And this, again, points to the importance of reexamining historical materials in search of deeper understandings of Southeastern ritual.

A fourth assumption concerns the domain of culturological studies. Culture is exclusively defined as a shared body of symbols and meanings within a community (Schneider 1976). This study has been informed, if that is not already obvious, by the tradition of symbolic anthropology.

The type of symbolic archaeological research that is advocated (not to say well exemplified) in this study, emphasizing the discovery and elaboration of heuristics to be used deductively in relation to empirical data, is obviously of limited scope so far as the total range of Mississippian studies are concerned. But the method and its goals are not necessarily incompatible with many of the aims of modern, materialist processural research, especially of ecologically oriented archaeology.

Until fairly recently nearly all archaeological studies of Mississippian cultures in the Southeastern United States have taken as their research focus one or another, or some combination, of only four limited cultural concerns: stylistic relationships, settlement, subsistence, and (on a primitive level) social organization. These traditional concerns have become so firmly entrenched as theoretically and methodologically appropriate issues, that others have, in a sense, been automatically treated as out-of-bounds. Archaeological studies which have specifically dealt with aspects of mental life have especially borne a certain stigma, since the unfamiliar and non-materialistic methodologies used in its illumination tend to sound, to the uninitiated, like so much hocus-pocus.

This study, by taking as its subject matter the symbolism of public ritual, obviously and deliberately breaks out of the traditional mold, and thereby invites the burden of much closer than usual scrutiny and more suspicious than usual criticism. But there is much more to it than that. There is reason to be concerned with the "image" of symbolic analysis within an increasingly materialist-dominated archaeology, which has to do ultimately with the relevance and adequacy of the paradigm itself.

The importance of symbolic analysis in Mississippian studies is that it forces the recognition of a great proportion of prehistoric human behavior as fundamentally symbolic in content, reflecting the operation of an integrated, coherent system of symbols and meanings — a world view — that can be reconstructed from its phenomenal manifestations. Such a reconstruction is derived and presented as a generalized model, which like any other archaeological model, seeks to account for patterning in the archaeological record. The primary example from the present work is

the formulation of a preliminary set of core symbols whose imagery, when projected against the platform mound data, was found to match adequately enough to infer that such imagery underlies the ritual behavior responsible for platform mounds. At this level, such models are admittedly gross representations of a highly complex reality, but they can also be improved upon and refined. Once it is accepted that it is both desirable and possible in archaeological research to discern some of the basic features of the collective cognitive repertoires operative among the subject population, then the implications may be seen for the study of diverse matters. To name a few: ceramic style patterning in time and space, scheduling of subsistence pursuits, division of labor, dietary habits and prohibitions, the use of domestic space, and (as in this study) public ritual. This exploratory study is intended to do nothing more than to make a rude beginning toward building a suitable and useful model of basic Mississippian world view and its ritual expressions, and to examine some potential avenues and methods of research.

As indicated earlier, the goals of a symbolic research paradigm for archaeology go much farther than simply providing an adjunct, relatively esoteric subject matter to a traditional slate of topics judged worthy of study. The breadth of these goals in anthropology may be seen in the recent ethnological work of Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971, 1976), who has developed a research strategy in which he has tried to show precisely how ideology and cosmology underlie and dictate strategies of environmental adaptation, through coding of environmental percepts. Reichel-Dolmatoff intends to show that

> aboriginal cosmologies and myth structures, together with the ritual behavior derived from them, represent in all respects a set of ecological principles and that these formulate a system of social and economic rules that have a highly adaptive value in the continuous endeavor to maintain a viable equilibrium between the resources of the environment and the demands of society (1976:308).

Similar studies in archaeology can be accommodated by the general paradigm of symbolic realism, without sacrificing empiricist, scientific methods. (A suitable introduction to the paradigm I am calling symbolic realism may be found in the works of Michael Polanyi: 1958, 1959, and 1966).

It might also be emphasized, in order to avoid any misunderstanding about the procedural nature of this study and other potential symbolic studies, that the inferential process and the modeling and testing procedures associated with verification are no different here than in any other legitimate scientific research strategy. In this case, there are quite obviously numerous test implications of the various conclusions reached, for example in the matter of chiefly/priestly ritual independence. The next item on the agenda is, of course, to make them explicit and examine them against new information, the normal way in which good ideas gain credence, and poor ones drop from sight.

The only major procedural difference between this study and more traditional Mississippian studies lies in its multidisciplinary approach, employing a variety of sources of information including archaeological, ethnohistorical, ethnological, linguistic, and folkloric data. The legitimization of using indigenous historical sources postdating the Mississippian period is based upon a growing body of folkloric, linguistic, and iconographic evidence regarding the long-term stability of core

symbolism and myth structures. It should eventually be possible to build a comprehensive theoretical base relating the longevity of symbolic features to their adaptive significance.

It might be argued that because of the multivocality and deep cognitive embeddedness of core symbols and metaphors, virtually anything that can be discovered about them will contribute substantially to a better understanding of historical processes and the various determinisms we seek to uncover. That is justification enough for pursuing this kind of research wherever circumstances allow it. While recognizing that there is no discontinuity between the study of natural systems and the study of humankind, we must not fail to affirm that the most distinctive and profound form of existence we know of is the rational consciousness of humans, a subject eminently worthy of our understanding and participation.

Having walked in some prehistoric aboriginal village, have you neared where the inhabitants defined themselves and their world in ritual, with the intention of learning how? 1981

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Vernon James Knight, Jr. was born in Sylacauga, Alabama in 1953. After attending high school in Appleton, Wisconsin, he pursued undergraduate studies in anthropology at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh and at the University of Alabama. Prior to receiving the B.A. degree at Alabama in 1975, he worked as an undergraduate at Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama under the direction of David L. DeJarnette. In 1977 he received the M.A. degree in archaeology from the University of Toronto, under the supervision of William H. Hurley and James B. Griffin. After a brief stint of fieldwork in Georgia, he returned to graduate studies at the University of Florida, receiving the Ph.D. degree in 1981 under the direction of Jerald T. Milanich.

He is married to Judith G. Knight and has two daughters.

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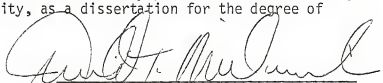

Jerald T. Milanich, Chairman
Associate Professor of Anthropology

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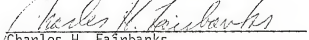

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Prudence M. Rice
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Associate Professor of Anthropology

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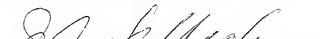

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This dissertation was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June, 1981

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Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

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Dean, Graduate School